539
881 intellectual learning in it, though very scanty and insignificant. Every morning the candidates are brought together to the place of the formulae (nau-milau, law, prescription). There is a tree in the midst of this square. A special instructor, whose father has already exercised this function, climbs up the tree and begins to teach the boys. He says :

Little boys, do you hear me. I say...

Then come the words of the secret formulae which are a great taboo and which they must learn by heart, sentence after sentence. I have collected some of them, Thonga and Pedi. Here I will reproduce only the Thonga. They are partly incomprehensible, even to the initiated. The first is called *Manhengwana*. It is the name of a bird.

Masumanyana a nga suma...
The little bird has sung.
A nga suma tinghala ta timhingo...
It has stirred the handles of the lances which are like lions...
T'entsha ku ya tlhabana...
They pierce each other...
Manhengu. Manhengu bentshile. Bentsha tirula...
The bird... ? ?
Fula ngoma... Mukhubela wa hantana...
Forged at the lodge. Clouds come from all parts.
Milumbyana saben. Sabe khula ra barimi.
Rivulets in the sand, forming the great Sabi.
Ntje-ntje bya ngulube... Bya shinana sha rila...
The running of the wild pig... Of the frog which cries...
Byi longolokile byi ya kamba ntjonga wa mbila.
They are walking in good order, they go to visit the mysterious hut.
Ba kuma byi ri buconga, songa bya timhiri ni timhamba...
They find it like the twisted rings of the adder.

These words, so far as they have a sense, seem to extol the Ngoma and its lodge. These assagais, which are like lions which are going to tear each other, represent the school which is starting, awakened by the bird of the winter. The clouds coming from all directions are the boys converging on the sungi from all parts of the country, like rivulets which join together to form a great river. The running of the wild pig is the life of the boy who was idling away his time till initiation made a man of him. The croaking of the frog (shinana) is his childish stupidity. The

l: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

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shinana is a strange animal indeed, a small Batracian which is able, when attacked, to swell considerably : then it becomes so hard that its enemies, even a cock with a sharp beak, cannot pierce it. The circumcised boy, before initiation, was a shinana before it swelled up. By the trials of the Ngoma, he will become like this frog, an invulnerable and untamable adversary. (1) In the last sentences we see the bukwera, the troup of the circumcised, penetrating into the mysterious hut, into the Ngoma, and wondering at the extraordinary wisdom which is found there. The laws, rites and trials are like the inextricable intermingling of many snakes.

The sungi is then celebrated again in the following sentences :

A mi ri i sungi...
Say, it is the lodge.
Hansi ka rona, i tleketleka,
On the ground, there is a disgusting smell,
Henhla ka rona i thulawula...
On the roof, it is elevated and beautiful...
Makomole i mhandje...
Its supports are poles...
Tinga hi hala a djibalelo...
Long rods unite the poles... etc.

Nwatjabatjabane a nga tjabatjaba...
The heavy body which goes on heavily...
Shikari ka mipungu ni mihlanga...
Through the drifts and the reeds...
Masheka ya le ndjako, marumbu a wela ndjen.
Which must be cut open from behind, because its bowels fall down inside its body.
I ngwenya.
It is the crocodile.

Shiborekeketa mahlaluku makambaku...
The beast which opens the road to the drifts for the elephants...
A ta hi ku nwa ni ku hlamba...
It goes to drink and to bathe...
A mi ri mfubu ?
Do you not say, it is the hippopotamus ?

Nwatjabatjabane makandjya ka ku oma...
The beast which marches slowly on the dry ground...
Ku sa ku baleka nhlangasi,
And a marsh is formed by its heavy footsteps,
Ndlopfu, shibangamaphesa a nga riphembe, hi yona...
It is the elephant, the one who provides clothing (by the sale of its teeth) the one who brings wealth, it is he !

(1) Another explanation : The running to and fro of the wild pig describes the coming and going of the men who bring the boys to the "place of the crocodile," like pigs searching for their prey. The "Shinana" which cries is the little circumcised boy whose voice is hardly heard amidst all the noise of that terrible day. He is a small powerless thing, like the frog.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

618 the same way as Pedi diviners do for their various tribes, represent-
551 ing them by the astragalus of their totems.
177 As regards these two incidents, they are easily explained by the influence of the Sutho tribes amongst which these Thongas have been living for a long time. Nothing of the kind is met with amongst the Thongas who have remained in their own country, and Maaghe, the Pedi-Khaha chief, assured me that this appellation of the Nkunas, Nyari, buffalo, is modern and borrowed from the Pedis. The Nkunas do not observe any taboo in connexion with the ox, and this shows that their totemic custom is a mere external imitation of that of the Suthos. These two instances might be called cases of *secondary* or *adopted totemism.*

618 Considering only the Thongas as compared with the Pedis, we
551 might be tempted to conclude that the Thongas had preserved
178 the old Bantu custom of naming themselves after their ancestor ; just as the Thongas used to add to that name other laudatory expressions, we might suppose that the Pedi tribes had adopted names of animals to glorify themselves ; in the course of time, the essentially totemic fears and taboos may have been introduced into the customs, owing to the importance given to the shibongo. This would be a rationalistic explanation of totemism. *A priori* it could not be said to be impossible. Though totemism appears to be a very old custom of humanity, it is not necessary, *per se*, that the Bantu tribes should have all passed through that phase of primitive belief.

618 3) I must, however, mention a third instance which shows
539 that this notion of a community of life between an animal and
178 a human group must have existed also amongst the ancient Thongas. There are, *in their folklore*, tales which seem to have been inspired by such old ideas now lost, especially the tale of Titishan, which I have published in "Les chants et contes des Ba-Ronga," page 253. A girl named Titishan marries a man. When she goes to her husband's home, she asks her parents to give her their cat. They refuse, saying : "You know that our life is attached to it." She insists, and they at last consent. She shuts the animal up in a place where nobody sees it. Her husband even ignores its existence. One day,

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when she goes to the fields, the cat escapes from its kraal, enters the hut, puts on the war ornaments of the husband, dances and sings. Children, attracted by the noise, discover it and inform the master of the village of the strange dancer they have seen... He goes and kills it. At that very moment Titishan falls to the ground, in her garden. She says : "I have been killed at home." She asks her husband to accompany her, with the corpse of the cat wrapped in a mat, to her parents' village. All her relatives attend. They severely reproach their daughter for having insisted on taking the animal. The mat is unrolled and, as soon as they see the dead cat, they all fall lifeless to the ground, one after the other. The Clan-of-the-Cat is destroyed and the husband returns home after having closed the gate of the village with a branch (See Page 323) : "Their life was in the cat."

Folk-tales are very ancient, and this one is by no means unique of its kind. (Compare Jacottet's "Treasury of the Ba-Sutho Lore," Morija 1908, Masilo punished for having eaten zebra's meat.) It shows that the totemic idea existed in former times, in those primitive periods of evolution which some Bantu tribes have now outgrown.

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4) A fourth fact tends to show that a mystic relation between an animal and a clan existed in former times. There is, in the north of the Transvaal, a kind of antelope called by the Natives *Shidyanaman*. It is taboo to kill it : "If a Nkuna does so, his family will die during the year, his wife, his children, his own head. Should he kill one by mistake, he must cry with a loud voice and shout : — Yoo! Shana n'ta da na mane! Alack! with whom shall I eat it ?" Mankhelu says it is taboo to eat its flesh, but the taboo is removed by this formula. The Ba-Nkuna do not know how to explain this custom. It may be a relic of former totemic ideas. However Mankhelu does not call the shidyanaman a ntshupu, a totem, and these customs may perhaps be connected with the *nuru* superstition (Comp. Ch. IV and Part IV, hunting customs). But even supposing that the Thongas have gone through the totemic phase, the present clans have entirely forgotten these ancient beliefs.

643 chiefs are entitled (1). The *elevation and the presentation* ended,
535 the next proceeding is the *gila* or war dance. The heroes of the army (batlhabani ba fumo), and the young men of blood royal rush one after the other into the enclosure brandishing their weapons, jumping as high as they possibly can, imitating acts of prowess on the battle field and simulating the transfixion of their enemies. The *gila* continues until the cry is heard : "Ye-yi, yé-yi, ye-yi." This murmuring sound uttered by the whole army marks the end of the jumping, and all re-form into line. All the shields must now touch one another, forming an immense unbroken circle, and then comes the *guba*, the intonation of the
643 solemn chant which is at once the principal patriotic song of the
533 tribe, the coronation hymn, the dirge of mourning, the war-song,
539 and the sacred melody par excellence :

Sabela ! Sabela nkosi ! Ji ! Ji !
Answer us ! Answer us, O chief ! Ji ! Ji !
Si ya ku wela mulambu mkulu wa ka nkosi.
Yes, we will cross the great river, the river of the chief.

This chant, which is in the Zulu language, is difficult to understand. The soloist commences with : "Sabela nkosi" which may be translated "Obey the chief ;" but the meaning would rather seem to be : "Reply to us, chief!" and, if taken in this sense, these words would be a request made by the army

643 609 576 (1) The word *Bayete* is said to be of Zulu origin and to convey the following meaning : bring thine enemies hither and destroy them ! *Ndjao* means lion. The warriors employ these terms to extol the power of their chief and, at the same time, to express their allegiance to him. There is a modern tendency to use this solemn salutation in a more general manner : for instance it is addressed to the Whites and not only to those in authority, but more or less to every one, even, in certain cases, to missionaries ! I always remember my arrival at the village of Shirinda, when I went to call on the chief Mahatlane, then unknown to me. I arrived at the gate of the kraal mounted on a most unpretentious little donkey and enquired of two young men who were there, where I could find the chief. "Bayete !" was the salutation I received and there was certainly nothing very regal either in my appearance or my "mount." One of these young men proved to be Mahatlane himself ! *Bayete* is also frequently used in acknowledging a gift from a superior and would then be merely the equivalent of "thank you." In Gaza, Gungunyana would not allow Bayete to be said to any one but himself. All the petty chiefs of the Ba-Ronga insisted on their royal salutation and the Ngoni king could not put a stop to it, as they were direct dependencies of the Whites and did not derive their authority from him.

1 [For the coronation of a chief -- Analyst]

643 533 539 to the chief, to which he will reply by executing the dance which follows. To this exclamation of the soloist the warriors respond by striking their shields with their assagais, producing a hard sharp sound, which the chant tries to render by the syllable "Ji! Ji!" Then they stamp their feet, saying: "Vu! Vu!" and this enigmatic sentence follows: "Yes, we will cross the great river, the river of the chief." What is this river? Can it be that which separates the Mpfumo country from Khosen, namely the Nkomati? Or the Mitembe, marking the frontier between the Northern and the Southern Ba-Ronga? Or do not these mysterious words rather refer to the river of death, which the entire host should cross without hesitation if called to do so by their chief? Whatever the exact meaning may be, this chant must be an assurance of loyalty on the part of the warriors to their king and probably also an appeal to his valour.

643 535 701 The chant ended, no one is allowed to leave the ranks. The chief alone rushes into the enclosure; every warrior holds his shield in his hand and strikes it with hard sharp blows (ku ba ngomana); on hearing these, the chief begins to *gila* in his turn. He executes the war-dance brandishing his assagai, as if killing invisible enemies. The crowd encourages him, inciting him to still further efforts, crying: "Silo! Silo! Silo! Beast of the fields! Lion!" Volleys are fired. The chief redoubles his exertions, gesticulating furiously, perspires profusely, is well nigh exhausted and finally stops! The whole army sits on the ground and the young king is supplied with a jug of beer to quench his thirst.

When the ceremony has lasted long enough, and the warriors have enjoyed at their ease the spectacle of their chief's prowess, the Commander-in-chief dismisses the battalions, one after the other. The circle (mukhumbi) breaks up and all rush to the residence of their respective counsellors, singing as they go the praises of the particular army-corps to which they belong. The members of the royal family return to the capital, where they remain. A counsellor presents each group or regiment with the ox which has been allotted to it; this is accepted with shouts of "bayete." The men cut up the animal, divide the meat and eat it in their respective quarters.

796 273 786 gait, brandishing sticks with pieces of red cloth attached as pennants. They are in search of full barrels! It must be said that the inebriety produced by the bukanye is of a rather mild type, as this Native beer contains very little alcohol ; but the quantity absorbed is so enormous that it ends by going to their heads : this is more especially so with the bukanye brewed from a species of nkanye called *nunge*, which appears to be stronger and more intoxicating.

796 273 833 786 How far does sexual licence go during the bukanye ? Not to the point of general promiscuity, as amongst the Ba-Pedi after the circumcision school. However many cases of adultery occur. Men and women forget the elementary rules of condvet. They attend to the wants of nature in the same places, which is taboo under ordinary circumstances : "Nau a wa ha tiyi,"—"the law is no longer in force."

796 273 643 631 Still, in the midst of all this carnival, the payment of the tax must not be forgotten... This is the time to carry to the chief the liquor which is flowing so freely on all sides, but of which he claims the lion's share. Each petty chief sends his people to the capital with brimming jars. This is termed "lumisa hosi," supplying the chief with new wine. The women do not enter the capital at once, but go to one of the counsellors, who promptly abstracts a couple of jars for his own use. The chief returns one or two jars to the carriers, as they have come a long way and are doubtless thirsty ; the remainder will be kept to refresh the very numerous guests at the Court ; any coming from afar will spend the night and not return until the next day. I have seen a company of these women carrying baskets 539 full of makanye to Muzila. How graceful was the Indian file winding its way along the path and singing, amongst others, the following chorus : (See for further particulars *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 46.)

Chwe ! Chwe ! Hi laba shimungu — Leshi ka — Le tilwen !
Chwe ! Chwe ! Shimungu hi mani ? — Hi Mzila ! — Hi Mzila !
Hi ! Hi ! We seek the hawk ! — Who soars — In the sky !
Hi ! Hi ! Who is the hawk ? — It is Mzila ! — It is Mzila !

539 There is quite a collection of these carriers' songs praising the chiefs. Mzila (or Muzila), whom we saw a short time back scaring sparrows, is here compared to the mythical lightning bird, to the hawk that swoops down from the clouds. (See Part VI.) Why does he not once for all annihilate the sparrows which pillage his fields of sorghum ? But this is poetry! and there is often a wide gap between poetry and reality!

d) The feasting of the chief in the villages.

796 273 643 The fourth and final act of the bukanye feasting in which, as we have seen, the chief plays a prominent part, is the *nsungi* which may be called the "fin de saison" orgy. The chief now returns the visits of his subjects and casks of beer are prepared for him in every village. Dancing and singing are in full swing. He is fêted and acclaimed! But the makanye are getting over-ripe ; a new month, a new moon is at hand, which is called *sibandlela* "she who closes the roads ;" the paths leading to the foot of the trees become almost impassable, owing to the grass which grows to an incredible height during the rains prevailing at this season. The fine weather is over. Winter is knocking at the door.

796 789 643 262 821. Amongst the Nkunas the luma ceremony called "to eat the new year" (dyaka ñwaka) is performed with a special pumpkin (kwembe) cooked at the capital together with the medicine used for rain-making. The chief first eats of it in the evening and makes the sign of a cross on the big drum, which is then beaten to call the people in his village. Then all the men come, bringing the little horns in which they keep the rain medicine (See Part VI). They eat a little and smear the rim of these horns with the medicine ; the horns also must "eat the new year." Then everybody can enjoy the products of the harvest. Should anyone precede the chief, this would be fatal to the latter or make him ill... Such is the testimony of Mankhelu. I suspect these rites to have been influenced by the proximity of the Ba-Pedi. "Now we have no longer any first fruits' feast (mulumo)," says Mankhelu with some melancholy. "White people have killed it. Everybody

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

644 He shouted like a madman and no one took the slightest notice of him!

When the chief kills an ox and possibly some little delay occurs in distributing the meat, the *mbongi* is the duly qualified beggar who goes to claim the soldiers' share. He addresses the chief much as follows : "Don't you see all those men in your village ? Are they not dogs ? Why do you starve us ? You only give meat to the women... Is it women who will defend you when the enemies attack you ? etc. etc." At the coronation of the chiefs it is this herald who sings their praises in the procession I have already described. Strange to say, the *mbongi* is allowed great licence and may even insult the chief without provoking his anger ; on the contrary, the herald is respected and a special portion of meat is reserved for him. Any one can aspire to the office provided he be sufficiently garrulous.

The most eloquent of the Thonga heralds whom I ever met is Mawewe, the mbongi of the Nkuna clan. He was an elderly man in 1900 and had a long career behind him, having been the mbongi of Manukosi. "I used to praise him from morn to night (ndji peta dambu) and he gave me a heifer as a reward." As the French writer Buffon used to put on his cuffs before writing, so Mawewe, when he intended to praise his chief Muhlaba, adorned himself with the tail of the nsimango antelope, with the feathers of the nkulunkulu (the bird of the chiefs) and of the eagle, with the skins of snakes, of the reed buck, and of the leopard, and with the nails, teeth, or hair of elephants, rhinoceros and hippopotamus ; then he began :

644 539 Muhlaba Shiluvane, (1) you are like the rhinoceros who seizes a man, bites him through and through, rolls him over and cuts him in two! You are like the crocodile which lives in water ; it bites a man! You are like its claws ; it seizes a man by his arms and legs, it drags him into the deep pool to eat him at sunset ; it watches over the entrance to prevent other crocodiles from taking its prey... Muhlaba! You are like the ram ; when it butts with its head, it knocks a man down ; like a goat, like the son of the goat, which is herded by the boys,

(1) Father of Muhlaba.

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which is very cunning : it pricks up its ears, it prepares itself for defence, when attacked!

Tail of nsimango, you are like Muhlaba, you are of a great beauty, you are shining inside the forest, the black forest, you are sparkling, kati-kati-kati, (1) a man may truly fear when he sees you!

Give them meat, that they may all eat! Give your men the foreleg,

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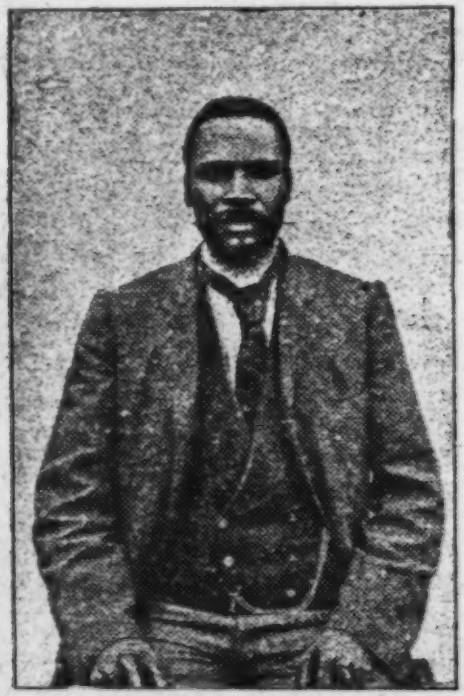

Muhlaba, the Chief of the Nkuna clan. *Phot. A. Berd.*

give them the hindleg, that they may all eat to their hearts' content... Pull their legs forward (ba koke milenge), so that they fall back in terror of you!

Why do you govern them so mildly! Look at them with terrible

(1) Descriptive adverb.

r 644 eyes! You are a coward! The Bveshas want to kill you! Act with
339 bravery and defend yourself!

Muhlaba Dabuka! Men are coming, oxen are coming. You are on the top of the hills, you are like heaven which roars... The lightning is like you, it is full of strength, it is terrible! Your saliva is white, your eyes are beaming, your face is elongated, your body is like the stone of gold (auriferous quartz); your fingers are long. You are known in every country. At Gungunyana, they know you. At Ngwana (Swaziland), they know you. The Zulus know you! At Mosilakatse, they know you. You are like the grass on the road; when people trample on it, they crush it to the ground, but when the rain comes, it grows again and covers the earth. You are like the water of the river, how beautiful! The water is clear and pure, though impurities may float upon it, they pass away and the water is pure again!

The Bveshas weep at Sikokoro's kraal! (1) They weep at Sikhukhunu's! You have taken their charms! You have sprinkled your warriors with them. Muhlaba, you have beaten them with the shaft of the assagay, your men crossed the river, they went to kill the enemies in their own kraal!

You are like the ostrich feather, the white one, very white, or the red one of the bird which cries tswe-tswe, the bird called rivi, which adorns the chiefs!

At Nyarin, (2) they dispute chieftainship (banga buhosi); they are going to kill each other. Mapsakomo says: "It is mine!" Muholo says: "It is mine!" Shirundju (3) took him (Muhlaba) in his arms... Mankhelu is like the duiker antelope! They catch him by the ear and he escapes from their hands! He is like the water of the well: they draw it off... it springs up again and fills up the well. (Viz., Mankhelu is never tired when defending the cause of Muhlaba.)

Run, go and tell Mandlamakulu, Shiluvane's brother: "The

(1) In 1901, there was a Native war in which Muhlaba and the Pedi chief Maaghe fought against their neighbour Sikororo and his ally Sikhukhukhu, heir of Sekukuni. On the 7th of November a fierce battle took place in Shiluvane where the assailants were repulsed and more than forty of them were killed. (See App. X)

(2) Here Mawewe makes an allusion to the circumstances in which Muhlaba took over the chieftainship and which have been explained when dealing with the law of succession. The capital of the tribe was still at Nyarin, at that time, viz., in the hills near New Agatha. (See page 413.)

(3) One of the great counsellors who took the part of Muhlaba as did also Mashhelu and Shikhibane.

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539 power belongs to me." Run, go and tell Mpapalati: "The power is mine." Run, go and tell Mulondjo: "The power is mine!" (1)

Such is the laudatory song of Mawewe, one of the great men at the Nkuna court. Undoubtedly this is one of the best examples of Thonga poetry and a characteristic piece of primitive literature. In the savage tribe the mbongi is the prototype of the poet laureate of civilised Courts. But there is yet another functionary to be considered, whose dutie sare still more strange than those of the herald.

IV. *The Public Vituperator.*

(Shitale sha tiko.)

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578 This is a kind of Court Jester who has the right of casting the vilest insults, the most disgraceful accusations in the teeth of any and all the Natives of the country. He never abuses strangers, but as long as he confines his vituperations to his own countrymen, he enjoys perfect immunity.

Even the chief is not safe from his attacks; he dares to say anything! "Just see him arriving in your village," said Tobane to me, in his picturesque language. "He begins shouting out the most frightful things. He accuses you of incest, of taking your own sisters as wives! Even if he sees you talking to your 'great sister-in-law,' whom your wife's brother married with your oxen, whom you treat with the greatest respect, he will not hesitate to pass remarks which will make you blush with shame! He will go and take the food you are cooking, will even snatch from the chief's hands the meat he is eating... So, when you see him coming to your village, you hasten to meet him and take him a present to try and avoid having to listen to his horrible insults. Sometimes the *shitale* of the country behaves

(1) Quotation of the words of Muhlaba himself, who sent messengers to all his uncles, to all the petty chiefs under him, to announce officially that he had assumed the chieftainship.

726 703 Before going into battle, certain rites have to be accomplished. In order to stimulate a war-like courage and to imbue the warrior's minds with a certainty of victory, it is necessary to proceed to the performance of the war-songs (guba), of the war dances (gila), and to administer the medicine which will render the soldiers invulnerable.

E. WAR SONGS.

533 539 The performance of war songs is called *guba*. I have already fully described the Mpfumo national song, (p. 373) which would seem to be more adapted to celebrate a coronation than to serve as an incentive to battle ; it is however used indiscriminately for both purposes.

Another war-song which is very popular in the Mpfumo clan is the following :

Zulu : U ngwa zi mu thini, Mayeye ?
U banga muhlaba, u bulala bantu !
Ronga : U ta ku mu yini, Ñwayeye ?
U banga nilhaba, u dlaya bhanu !
What will you succeed in doing to him, Ñwayeye ?
You take the country and slay the people !

This is a question addressed to Ñwayeye, the rival of the chief Zihlahla ; Ñwayeye was placed in authority near Lourenço Marques by the Portuguese between 1860 and 1870. He accepted the position, but was unable to retain it any length of time, and the recollection of his failure is perpetuated in this song which is intended to extol the royal family of Mpfumo.

A third song, also in vogue with the Mpfumo warriors, runs thus :

Zulu : Zi m' thini ? A ba ze zi ba bona, abantu bezizwe !
Ronga : Hi ta ku yini ? A ba te hi ba bona, bhanu ba matiko !
What shall we say ? Let them come and let us see them, the people of the enemy's country !

This is a defiance hurled at the adversaries.

533 In Nondwane, they also sing this last song ; another runs as
539 follows :

Zulu : Ngambala ! ngi file...O..o..o.. Zinkomo zito !
Ronga : Nwamboten, ndji file ! O..o..o.. Tihomu teru !
My friend ! I am killed. Oh ! oh ! oh ! Our oxen !

The warriors doubtless refer to the ruin which would be entailed were the enemy to carry off their cattle, and thus they encourage one another to fight stubbornly!

Another Ronga song performed in the guba ceremony is this :

Zia yi khalelo mukhu ya se mananga
We are weeping for the giraffe of the desert.

The giraffe may be the chief of the clan whom the warriors are determined to protect, or perhaps the enemy's chief whom they will go and kill.

This song is also one of the great guba songs of the Nkuna clan, but the words are slightly different. I have collected two others :

Hi yi kwa makhosi !
Si phuma ka makhosi, Si gambuza !
U mkhonto wo sandhlemi, Eji ! Eji !
U mkhonto wuo gobee...

War comes from the chiefs !
It is ordered by the chiefs ! We go and kill !
The spear is in our hands ! Eji ! Eji !
The spear kills and bends in the wound !

The oldest of the Nkuna guba songs, which was already in use before the arrival of Manukosi, at the begining of the XIXth century, when the army still formed in line and not in circle, runs as follows :

Hi bo yima hi bo yima !
Mi teka bumba mi nyika tinuba (?) za bambe.
Let us stand fast, let us stand fast !
Do not let your strength go, it would help the enemy to conquer.

The words of this song are Thonga, as the Zulus had not yet imposed their terminology on the Thonga yimpi.

One of the finest war songs is that sung in the armies of Maputju

533 and Tembe, an antiphon seemingly very ancient, which changes
539 from the minor to the major, producing a truly grandiose effect : (For the music of most of these songs, see Vol. II. Part V.)

"At break of day," sings the solist,....
"Who was it that crowned thee, Muwai, king of Maputju?" reply the warriors.

Muwai is the great-great-grandfather of the chief Mabai, deposed in 1896. He reigned at the close of the XVIII[th] century, his son Makasana having been chief from 1800 to 1850. Muwai is compared to the rising sun, or at least the song recalls his coronation, which must have taken place very early in the morning, at daybreak. It is evidently in praise of the royal family that the entire army chants this glorious souvenir.

Loko ku ti qa, loko ku ti qa
U bekwe ngubane Muwai ?
Muwai, ka Mabudu ! Muwai ka Mabudu !
U bekwe ngubane ?

At day break — At day break
Who was it that crowned thee, Muwai ?
Muwai, king of Maputju ! Muwai, king of Maputju
Who was it that crowned thee ?

726 As we see, the war songs are tolerably short ; a declamation of three or four words by a soloist (musimi) who dances in the middle of the circle, and a chorus sung by all the warriors, stamping their feet on the ground and striking their shields with their assagais. (Hence the exclamation "Eji" found at the close of some sentences.) Or sometimes the whole throng brandish the assagai in a rythmical fashion, raising it first to the right, then to the left, afterwards inclining it to the side, and lastly downwards as if to pierce...

When the great war-induna wants the song to stop, he gives a signal. At once all the shields are elevated and a sibilant murmur runs through the ranks : shi-shi-shi-shi, or a special click : nqu-nqu-nqu. Hence the verb *nqunquzela*, to stop a war song.

And then the war dance will take place.

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

726 prescribed rites. I once witnessed it, when the Nkuna army went
707 to Sikororo's country on a kind of punitive expedition. The great ndjuna of the army, the Commander-in-Chief, Mankhelu, his stern face grimmer than ever, holding a hyena's tail in his hand, clad in a white shirt which was very little in keeping with the whole appearance of the mukhumbi, stepped inside the large circle and raised his tail... Then the *Dhlanazo*, the young bloods, ran towards him shouting : "Kwe-kwe-kwe!" Their cry is the same as that of the *Timbulwana* (lynx), their elders, who came next. Mankhelu pointed the tail in a certain direction and these two regiments started. The *Mafakubi* came in their turn, imitating the galop of the antelopes : "tshwi-tshwi-tshwi! gwu gwu... hwu, hwu!... eka-ka-ka-ka..." and finally shouting : "N'ta dya na man" — "with whom shall I eat it ?" — a strange sentence which may be, as previously mentioned, a reminiscence of a totemic period! (See page 366)... The *Matsyoni*, the seabirds, followed shouting "tswe-tswe-tswe ;" the *Mamphondo*, those of the horn, came shouting "tshuba-tshuba-tshuba" and imitating buffalos and rhinoceroses. The *Maphisi* started last, howling wildly like hyenas : "hum-hum-hum..."

726 If the field of battle is far away, if there is a long march to
533 be made, special *marching songs* are sung on the road. The
539 most impressive is the following : a soloist sings in a very high key :

Abafo! — The enemy!

and the whole army answers in a rich and tuneful melody :

Enena-a-a! a-a! — Here they are!

All the shields are held straight, ready to meet the foe.
Here are two other marching songs :

Nangu moya wa tshisizwe!
We are the fire which burns the country!
Inkonyana ya ndlopfu inhlezio baen...
The calf of the elephant is exposed on the plain...

This means the chief who is in danger! Let us protect and deliver him.

587 her, but nothing could persuade her. She stayed in her parents' village. In a neighbouring village dwelt a young man named Muzila, who was the chief of the Rikatla district (Page 381). He belonged to the Mazwaya clan, to the reigning family. He had two brothers, one of whom, called Gudu, was still a boy. This girl, Gidhlana, began to make friends with the boys of Muzila's village. Gudu sent a woman from the village of Ngwetsa to make proposals to Gidhlana (ku mu wopseta). This woman made proposals on behalf of Gudu (a wopsetela Gudu). The girl agreed. But, in the meantime, Gudu started for Johannesburg and Gidhlana was abducted by the other brother, who took her to the village of Muzila ; it was a case of marriage by theft (tlhuba) (See p. 119). Muzila was grieved at the conduct of these young men, and sent the girl to one of his counsellors to be watched over by him and, going to Ngwetsa, her father, he said : "We have stolen your pot. Look for it in our village, the village of Mazwaya's people." Ngwetsa was greatly puzzled. The first husband had not yet claimed his money back ; it was still in the hands of Ngwetsa and lo! the girl had already been taken by others! This was not right at all! They might have waited a little! All the men of Ngwetsa armed themselves and started as enemies (hi bulala) for the village of the thief.

587 639 They killed a pig, entered the hut of the thief, took all his implements and made a heap of them on the square. The inhabitants all fled into the bush. But one of them came back with 10 . and said : "Have pity on us, please! We clasp your legs! (khom[illegible]lenge, viz., ask for forgiveness). You know ? To steal is a very old thing on earth!" "Yes, we know. The thief trusted his throat! (This is a proverb : he did not fear to swallow a large stone, thinking that his throat would be wide enough to let it pass!) He knew that he would have to pay this fine! All right! You are saved! Take the implements back into the hut."

587 The Ngwetsas took away with them the flesh of the pig, but they sent one joint to the thief, so that he might eat it with his new wife. In this way they gave their consent to the marriage. "They gave him his wife."

586 But very soon afterwards the first husband, Khandlela, came to Ngwetsa to claim the lobola money, as his wife had gone. Gudu had gone to Johannesburg, so nothing was to be found in that quarter. The discussion began. Ngwetsa said : "All right ; but 10 of the lobola money must remain with us, for the fence of our village (lihlampfu)." This is generally done when a woman has been driven

539 For texts of folktales, see category 116, pp. 226-275.
773

825 791 The reader must certainly have noticed the curious connection established by Mboza between hippopotami and wizards. As we shall see when studying the witchcraft theory, wizards are supposed to have the power of *sending* wild animals to kill their victims. Here the idea is somewhat different. In the three stories which I have collected and of which I give a literal translation, the wizards have become the masters of the hippopotami and ride upon them during the night : they are the maleficent agents who induce these animals to play havoc in the gardens of the people. Two of the stories are supposed to have taken place in the Khosen country, the other lower down on the river, at a spot called Shihahlu. Let us begin with this one.

825 791 539 *First story.* "The wizards put a bit into the mouth of the hippopotamus and climb upon it. You cannot get the animal unless you first get its master. The 'phisa' knows the wizard because he possesses drugs more powerful than those of the wizard. At Shihahlu there was a hippopotamus which ventured to come out of the river even in daylight; it came on to the road and frightened the women passing there who had gone to buy food on account of the famine. They threw away their baskets in fear. The beast used also to go and plunder the fields. The chiefs called a very clever hunter and showed him where the hippopotamus used to come out of the river. This man, who was from Sihhahlu, swallowed his medicine and put on a great many amulets (timfisa) made of varan skin; he also took his tail, the tail of a young hippopotamus, went during the night to that spot and saw the beast ; there was fire on its back ; this fire belongs to the wizard. (Where do these lights come from? I do not know. Perhaps it is the work of the Devil!) The hunter returned home. Another day he went again and heard a noise in the water ; the hippopotamus came out of the river and the hunter saw rings round its ears and bracelets round its legs. He shot it and it died. Then he went to tell the chiefs. They came, and sure enough they found four bracelets on each leg and six rings on each ear. I saw them myself. It had put on all its ornaments ; but it was very thin because it was made to work hard for its master. We went to eat the meat of the hippopotamus which was thus adorned (longile)... During the night cries of mourning were heard on the Lombye rivulet. It was the masters of the hippopotamus who were mourning over it, and the next morning we found pieces of the blue cotton print which

is used by mourners hanging on the reeds where the hippopotamus had been cut open. These people had put them there to mourn their hippopotamus. As regards the hunter, he was given a reward of £ 6." 825 539 791

Second story. "A phisa called Shitjobeke from Matlotlo was called and shown where the hippopotamus used to emerge from the river. He went there during the night and saw its master on its back. He told him: 'So it is your hippopotamus which ravages the gardens. Hold it firm! I am going to kill it.' The wizard answered: 'I beseech you, Khosa, do not kill it; I will not come any more to spoil the mealies!' The hunter let him go and went away. Next evening the animal came out again, its master on its back. The hunter possessed a drug by which he could kindle the lights on the back of the hippopotamus. He saw the wizard and said: 'My friend, now hold it fast. I am firing! If you do not hold it I will kill you.' He fired and the master went away. The hunter remained on the spot fearing that the wizard might come back and ressuscitate it. Next day he told the chiefs to come and cut it open. He performed the lurulula; he blew his ndjao over the legs, the belly, the chest, and the ears; then they turned the beast over on the other side, and he did the same thing. They cut off the tail and gave it to him: the hunter uses this as a medicine; he will mix it with other drugs and this will help him against the wizards; they will no longer be able to come to him during the night and make him dream of hippopotami; it will also give him the power of killing other hippopotami. Then they cooked the meat of the chest, which is a tit-bit. The divinatory bones showed who was to roast it and eat the first mouthful and then distribute their portions to the others. The bones often say also: 'If it is the meat of a male hippopotamus do not eat it in the village, eat it at such and such a place...' [789]

Third story. "There was another hunter, Mundjindji, of the Nyoka clan. His father had been killed by Heaven (lightning), because he possessed charms which he had got from the Ba-Sutho. This man used to dig up the corpses of the dead; he dissected the skin of their foreheads and killed, (with the drugs thus obtained,) the boys who came back from the mines (magaisa). The Commandant (Portuguese Administrator) arrested him, and he was imprisoned in Lourenço Marques. He said: 'They are telling lies about me,' and he was released. However he killed some more people and was imprisoned for one month. Even now he is still doing it. He is a 'phisa.' They called him in to get rid of a hippopotamus which was annoying them. It was the Commandant who called him. He went to hunt it. For many

539 791 825 days he did not see it, but one day, at sunset, he took his canoe and went on to the river. He took a red piece of cotton ; this was reflected at the bottom of the river. The hippopotamus saw it there and came up to see what was the matter. The hunter fired at it ; he fired a second time. And lo! there on its back was the one who rides upon it! One of the balls pierced him whilst the other pierced the hippopotamus. The animal rushed towards the hunter, but he fired a third time and killed it. Next morning they found the hippopotamus floating on the water, dead. In the village also a man had died during the night, and they were mourning there. The hunter had said to the people : 'I have killed a man who was on the hippopotamus.' And on one side of the river people were eating meat whilst on the other side people were crying. But they did not lodge a complaint against him ; no action can be taken in such a case."

224 777 As regards *the elephant (ndlopfu)* it was the favourite object of the chase, because killing one of these large beasts meant not only abundance of meat but also wealth on account of the ivory. Madyashikulu used to bring the tusks to Manukosi (Gungunyana's grandfather) who returned some of them to him, and with the money thus obtained the hunter could buy a wife. There are different systems of lurulula in the case of the elephant. The hunter takes a little of the tintebe powder (the charm of the slayers) pierces the eye of the beast, mixes the vitreum with the powder, adds drugs prepared from the end of the trunk and the tail and uses this mixture to overcome the nuru. A phisa of the Maputju country employed another method. He cut a piece of meat from the foreleg, cooked it, anointed it with powder from the calabash of the slayers, chewed it and began to blow it over the animal after having "climbed it." He then crept over the elephant in the same way as described above in the case of the hippopotamus, holding his gun in his hand the whole time. His comrades used to anoint him with a white medicine round both eyes. When he had returned home the treatment was continued by the administration of two vapour baths (mahungulo). He had to expose his body to the steam produced first by a decoction of various twigs, secondly by another decoction prepared from medicinal roots mixed with pieces of meat taken from a goat and from the elephant

302 The use of ochre is, however, not restricted to nursing mothers
538 or magicians : it is the special province of young marriageable
832 girls, wishing to attract attention : their brilliant skin shines like a mirror, setting off to perfection the white of their eyes and the black of their hair, which is sometimes made flossy by means of antimony or ground charcoal. A quaint saying puts it thus :

> Shindzingeri pundjene ? -Banhwanyana tolan !...
> What says the pretty bird with the coral neck that sings in the grass ?
> It says : Girls, anoint yourselves with ochre ! (if you wish to be as beautiful as it is).

177 Another ornament, of ancient date, is the *bracelet*. There
301 are several kinds : 1) the big heavy copper rings, called *masindana*, which greatly resemble those of the lake-dwellers, having a similar rather oval shape with an opening for slipping them over the wrist ; 2) the modern bracelets, called *busenga*, which the Rongas first bought in Natal, and which the Ma-Lemba introduced in the Northern clans ; they are made of iron wire twined round a ring of hide ; 3) the *mafowa* are more ancient, being made of seeds strung on thongs of skin, and are wound several times round the leg. This is an ornament for either dance or war.
301 The mafowa are sometimes made of the silvery cocoons of Argema Mimosae, the Queen Moth, which are found on nkanye trees, emptied of the chrysalis which is inside and filled with grains of millet which rattle when dancing !

301 *Beads* (nkarara) are evidently of later date ; they were introduced
439 by the Whites in the XVIth century, when the Portuguese were already in regular communication with Delagoa Bay and trafficked with the Natives, exchanging glassware for gold and ivory. Glass fascinated the Blacks : its brightness and transparency pleased
539 them immensely. An old song echoes their simple transports of delight :

> E ! Bashabi ! Batatana ba shabile ; ba buya ni shintshirimana sha balungoooo !..
> Hi ! Here come the buyers ! Our fathers return with their purchases ; they bring back with them the beautiful glittering things which the Whites sell !...

301 "A few years ago an ordinary glass bottle was thought a wonder by the people in the interior," said Timoteo Mandlati to me.

439 £ 60 ; and, in case of disagreement, the 60 cobs were counted again in corroboration of the contract made. If he brought an elephant's tusk, the Banyan gave him the value of a full lobolo. Carriers received two pieces of calico as reward.

437 After having visited Kimberley, in 1870, some Thongas, having begun to understand better the advantages of trading, attempted to undertake such expeditions on their own account. But they soon gave up the experiment as the Ngonis of Muzila often robbed them of all their goods. When they were working for White men, the Ngonis were afraid to pillage the company ; on the other hand, if by chance there was a loss, it concerned the White merchant. So they preferred the system of trading for the White men.

These travelling companies had to observe many taboos in order to succeed in their expeditions, in particular the *travellers' taboos*, which have been explained I. p. 339.

533 There are several popular songs which the traders used to
539 sing on the road, or which were sung about them. One of these
437 has already been quoted (p. 102). Here is another in which the tired carriers ask their leader to allow them to return home :

Hoho! hoho! maringele wa mamano!
Hoho! hoho! dla nkambana hi muka!
Hulukati ya ndlopfu yi nga siyi fiwana!

Oho! Oho! Thou who leadest us as a mother!
Oho! Oho! Break the platter and let us go home!
The female-elephant never forsakes her young!

437 The company generally consisted of men only. The allusion to the female elephant, however, may mean that there were sometimes also women amongst them. They address the leader of the expedition, asking him to destroy the platter so that no utensils shall be left in which to prepare food, thus necessitating a return home. They are thinking besides of their little ones left behind in the village, from whom it is unnatural for them to be separated so long. The mother elephant never forsakes her little one!

songs ; that will be considered in the next chapter, in which I intend to publish the forty-one tunes of my collection. Here I shall only consider them as literary products, and in trying to classify them, I have noticed that, though most of them cannot be said to be very elaborate compositions, they pertain to many different styles, lyric, elegiac, epic, dramatic, etc. and, in addition, there are those which are sung while at work, as well as the incantations to animals and spirits. I will give some examples of each of these categories.

II. *Lyric poetry.*

Thongas, like most human beings, have felt the need of chanting their joys and sorrows, joining words to music in order the better to express their feelings. These feelings are not as a rule very deep, and their lyrics are rather play than a painful cry of the heart. Here for instance is *the complaint of the childless woman*, who longs ardently for a baby. She has been to other people and asked them to lend her one. But they have refused and only consented to lend her a mortar and a plate. She then sings to a charming melody (Tune 7).

A ba boleki ñwana ! — Ba boleka tshuri ni nkambana !
Ngi ndji mangatlu ! — Ngi ndji shimungwe ! — Ngi n'ta ku utla !
They won't lend me a baby ! — They lend me but a mortar and a plate !
Were I an eagle ! — Were I a bird of prey ! — I would carry thee away !

The thousands of young Thongas *who go to the mines of Johannesburg*, to extract the precious auriferous quartz, seem to be quite contented with their fate. They, however, chant their

their sheet he fled to another country, but soon one of his eyes began to swell. His elder brother told him : "You have been bewitched by that woman," and his paternal aunt tried to heal him. She covered him with a piece of cloth, and made him expose his eye to the steam of a certain drug boiled in a pot below. She claimed to have succeeded, having found an ox-tail hair at the bottom of the pot when she poured out the water. This was however a lie. The eye complaint became worse, till he entirely lost his sight. He then devoted his life to music, and composed many songs to accompany the dances of the magayisa (boys going to work.) These songs became popular ; if a boy wished for one of them, his favourite, to be executed, he would willingly pay 200 reis ! — Mungomana is the only Thonga I heard of who used music in his religious rites. I shall give the words of his canticle in Part VI.

misfortunes to a very melodious tune (No. 8) which I once heard in Rikatla repeated a dozen times by children's voices along the bushy paths. The words were in Zulu and were said to mean : 533 539

Stones are very hard to break
Far from home, in a foreign land.

The tune is so catching that it has become quite popular even in French Switzerland, where I have had the opportunity of singing it on many occasions.

Once when I was walking after sunset in the neighbourhood of a miserable village of two or three huts in Rikatla, I was attracted by a simple melody repeated again and again by a feminine voice. A young woman with a child on her shoulders and engaged in cooking her food was singing. She had just lost her father. Her husband was a very bad character ; she had been obliged to leave him and to take refuge in her father's village, and, lo, he had died! Feeling lonely and abandoned by all her natural helpers, she was expressing her grief in a low tone by the following words sung to a tune full of sadness (No. 41).

Tatana a ndji siya	My father has left me !
Na ndji nga li na mumben !	And I had no other except him !
Ndji se psanga libalen	I remain alone on the earth !
Sha ndji ta ya kwini mbuu !	Where shall I go then, Alas !

I am afraid Bantu lyrics have more than once found occasion to celebrate the selfishness and *rudeness of the White race* ! I remember travelling through the desert with three Zoutpansberg colonists, and some of their black servants. The White masters were not exactly gentle with their boys. A road had to be cut through the bush and it was hard work to remove the stones, and to cut down the trees. The shambock was sometimes resorted to in order to stimulate the Natives. I once heard one of them, who had just been castigated, murmuring in a low tone his monotonous complaint, whilst chopping at a stem. I caught the following words : (Tune 9) 533 539 609 466

Ba hi shanisa !	They treat us badly !
Ba ku hi hlupa !	They are hard on us !
Ba nwa makhofi !	They drink their coffee !
Ba nga hi nyike !	And they give us none !

533 Of course the colonists, who only knew "Kitchen Kafir,"
539 could not understand the complaint of the Nkuna boy!

The *song of the crab* is more tragic! (Tune No. 10). In a deep minor key a man cries for help! He went to hunt the big crabs which dwell in the mud of the mangrove forest, or on the sea-shore. He followed one ; the animal hastily hid itself in its hole. The imprudent hunter tried to catch it there ; he put his arm into the hole and attempted to pull the crab out. But the crustacean seized his finger in its claws so firmly that the man could not get free. He remained tightly held down, fixed to the ground. The tide is rising ; soon it will cover him! And he cries :

Yo-o! Lomo tjukeni ku na mani? — Hala yi khomi litiho!
Alas! - On the shore is there some one? — The crab has caught me by the finger!

This is almost dramatic poetry and the scene is worthy of a true literary description.

533 The *erotic style* is cultivated by boys and girls on different
832 occasions though it must be said that love, as we understand it,
539 plays but little part in Thonga life. Boys in love generally express their feelings to the accompaniment of the unicord harp (see Chap. III) in the evening in the neighbourhood of the village of their beloved one ; I have never been able to catch the words of these songs, which are said to be sometimes very long, and are sung in a very loud voice ; they are not precisely chaste, according to one of our Native ministers, who considered that the use of the unicord harp ought to be forbidden to Christian boys! But here is a *love song* probably composed by a girl who was not allowed to marry the boy of her choice :

To-morrow, to-morrow, my mother, I will start,
To-morrow, father, I will start,
I will start with an axe ;
With this axe I will cut the stump,
The stump on which my friend has hurt his leg,
My friend whose belt of tails hangs from his waist,
The one for whom I draw my legs out of the way. (1)

784 (1) Perhaps an allusion to the fact that it is taboo to pass over any one's outstretched
516 legs. She draws in her legs to give him the means of passing and coming to sit beside her.

The stump is perhaps some ill-disposed person whose opposition the energetic maid is determined to overcome! 533 832

As a counterpart, here is the *complaint of a jilted lover*, who gives vent to his annoyance with the girl and her family : 539

Refuse me if you will, girl!
The grains of maize you eat in your village are human eyes!
The tumblers from which you drink are human skulls!
The manioc roots you eat are human tibia!
The sweet potatoes are human fingers!
Refuse me, if you will, girl!

The vexation of a jilted lover is of short duration. He has the money, he is sure to find a girl! But it would be erroneous to think Native lovers or husbands are not capable of deep and lasting affection. I know of a case, near Shiluvane, in which a Nkuna committed suicide because his wife had deceived him, and had relations with another man. 831

See, I. p. 286, the song in which the *despised wife* gives vent to her anger : her husband has plucked her little pumpkin and given it to the wife he preferred. No doubt the *bukwele*, the special feeling of jealousy existing between co-wives, has inspired more than one song which could find no equivalent in our own literature! 533

Mourning songs are numerous ; they are sung just after the burial. They are touching ; note the simple cry : 533 765

Mamane! You have left us! whither have you gone? 539

The tune (No. 14) is striking : a very high and prolonged note, followed by double crochets sounded very rapidly and ending in another long note with a short sharp conclusion, like a cry of anguish.

One of those present rises and sings, as if he were playing the part of the bereaved :

A ba ndji ya'ange-ke lepsi?
Have they not hated me, treating me in this way?

All the throng of the mourners answer :

Ba ku yalile, wene, wa ka manyana!
They have hated you, son of so and so!

533 He answers :

539 Ba tekile nkhao !
765 They have taken my intimate friend !

This is no doubt an allusion to the wizards, who are supposed to cause most of the deaths. They are cursed in another very curious song, half Zulu, noted down by Mrs Audéoud in Maputju. (Tune 16.)

Hamban, Muthakati ! Bulela bantu ! — U teka b'sikwin !
Go away, wizard ! Killer of men ! — You take them during the night !

Or the mourning song may be a complaint, in which the family bewails its bereavement, like the old Nkuna song. (Tune 15) :

Hi bana ba Nhumba ya ntima ! Hi bana ba Malala ni ngobe.
We are the sons of the black house (the house of misfortune and defilement)

The following is strangely stoic :

A li beni mombo ! A li beni mombo !
Ku tshubuka, ku baba ka psone !
Let it beat the face ! Let it beat the face !
To run away, what a bitter thing !

Death is like a foe. Look at it face to face! Dō not lose your courage in this last fight.

I quote in Part VI another mourning song, a very curious one, where an allusion is made to Heaven, the mysterious power which kills and gives life, which we have already heard mentioned in the song of the widows (I, p. 209), when they lament their bereavement.

533 This *stoic* song is also a *war* song ; it is customary to sing the
539 war songs at the death of any important personage. The following belongs to the same category, and is used on both occasions :

Kotle-kotle, ntlubana ! Fumo dji wila ! A dlawa hi nomo, Tatana !
Hear this noise of weapons ! The nanga has fallen ! He has been killed on account of his words, father !

The chief has been killed in a fight which had been caused by his imprudent words : he wished to free himself from his

suzerain (the Ngoni chief?); war ensued, and he was put to death! So the sorrow caused by death has certainly furnished Thonga poets with touching themes. 533 539

The heart of the whole tribe was also stirred, at the close of the before-mentioned war of 1894-1896, when the young chief Ñwamantibyane, only 18 or 20 years of age, was caught and deported to West Africa. *The lament of the child* was then composed by an unknown author; but he had so well understood the feelings of the Black nation that it at once became popular; and it was heard everywhere on the wharf, hummed by hundreds of boys carrying loads or pushing trucks, and chanting the sad fate of the child; in the villages, far and wide, they sang the recital of Ñwamantibyane's sufferings:

Ndumakazulu! The glorious! Known as far as Zululand!
He fought bravely! He was obliged to fly!
He was caught and deported... etc.

And ever and again came the chorus, in a sad, resigned tone: (Tune 11).

Hi ſwanao! Hi ſwana ba dlele! Ñwamantibyane!
It is the child! The child they have killed! Ñwamantibyane!

Eleven years later, when travelling far away in the Manyisa district, I heard a tall, thin boy playing on his unicord harp in a Banyan store, and muttering some words, which he accompanied by beating his instrument. This was the same old lament of the child:

It is the child, the child whom they have killed!
He was not yet grown up!

The melody had greatly changed (tune 12) and the pain had passed out of it. But the national song had not yet entirely died away.

This is a kind of elegy, and forms a transition to the patriotic and epic songs.

III. *Epic poetry.*

The war songs have already been quoted when dealing with the Army (I. p. 460), those performed in the mukhumbi, at the coronation of the chief (I. p. 372) when preparing to go to

Hlangwini wa ka Shitlhelane; hi ba ka Nkandamuri; hi ba ka Manyubele ni Mbowo; hi ba ka Gidjigidji, ba tilo. —. Akane ka paitjunga! Lomu akobeni mi ta muka hi kona...

Hlangwini of (the house of) Shitlhelane; we are of (the house of) Nkandamuri; we are of (the house of) Manyubele and Mbowo; we are of (the house of) Gidjigidji, the people of Heaven. —. Build (your huts) on the hills. In the valley you will have to leave (?)

614
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It would seem that these Hlangwinis are a clan of rain-makers, people having the power of Heaven. They advise others to settle on the hills and not in the valleys, because otherwise their huts would be swept away by the floods, owing to the terrible rains which the Hlangwinis have the power of causing to fall.

The second is not very refined, but is characteristic. Erotic allusions are frequent in those formulae :

Nkuna wa Mabutane; mabuta, ba yi bonile ku basa ka yona.
Nkuna of Mabutane; when wooing a girl, he has seen that she was pure.

Mabutane is probably a surname of Nkuna. There is in this formula a play on the word buta which means to woo (I. p. 101). Before choosing a girl, the ancestor first made sure that she was untouched ; this denotes a species of wisdom which his descendants still boast of to-day!

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In epic poetry may be included also the *pshiphato*, a Zulu expression which means the laudatory sentence with which warriors praise themselves according to the Zulu fashion. Private individuals, and even women sometimes have their shiphato ; for instance a girl bearing the name of Yandea will glorify herself in these words : Yendea, madjaha! Yendea, the young men! This formula does not throw a very favourable light on the habits of the girl, and scarcely belongs to literature!

A more elaborate product of Thonga poetry is found in the *hunting songs*. I have already mentioned these (p. 60) and here give as a typical example the Elephant's song. I have been told by my informant, Zebedea Mbenyana, a Native of Bilen, that the hunters performed it whilst dancing on the body of the enormous beast, after having transfixed it.

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1st Strophe.

533 They march in single file, the Elephants, the mighty ones,
They go to slake their thirst.

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Antistrophe.

539 Let us go too! They're drinking amongst the thickets! Hurrah

2nd Strophe.

Hark! the smothered roarings in the forest.

Antistrophe.

'Tis a grand sound, the roaring in the forest. Hurrah!

3rd Strophe.

The crying of the elephant, the mother! 'Tis she who calls the hunters to the thickets.

Antistrophe.

Hurrah! 'tis she who calls the hunters! Ho! Hurrah!

4th Strophe.

Yonder's the one with ears so large and drooping.

Antistrophe.

Hurrah! the big-eared one has just passed us. Hurrah!

5th Strophe.

The boys are there; the sound of knives being sharpened, there from the spot where the elephant lies slain.

Antistrophe.

Hurrah! the sound of knives being sharpened. Hurrah!

This composition certainly exhibits wonderful poetic power and grandeur, describing marvellously the emotions of the courageous band, who have finally succeeded in obtaining the precious tusks of the elephant, and vast quantities of meat. This song of triumph is worthy of a place amongst the best productions of the Muse of primitive races.

195 To the imaginative mind of the Bantu everything that causes a deep impression, even material objects, affords an occasion for the utterance of lofty phrases and words of praise. Once when travelling south of Delagoa Bay through the desert, our party arrived in the neighbourhood of the Umbelozi railway. The

train was heard in the distance. One of my servants was busy cleaning the pots ; I heard him muttering the following words : 195

The one who roars in the distance... The one who crushes in pieces the braves and smashes them ! The one who debauches our wives : they abandon us, they go (to the towns to lead a bad life) ! The seducer ! And we remain alone.

He was extolling the huge thing and lamenting his misfortune and the curse it has brought upon the country.

IV. *Satiric poetry.*

I have already mentioned the peculiar custom of Thonga literati of speaking in a round-about fashion, and using figurative language, especially when they want to say something disagreeable or to give vent to their humour. It is but one step from such forms to satire. They generally indulge in this satiric vein when dealing with relatives-in-law, women being especially prone to it. When the sisters and aunts of a married woman go to pay a visit to her, they convey all kinds of equivocal compliments. These must not be taken seriously! It is a round-about — exceedingly round-about — way of making graceful allusions and expressing their mutual esteem. I will quote the series of these songs of friendly chaff and invective as it was given to me by Shigiyane, with a running commentary to render them comprehensible. These lively and pointed choruses give a fitting finishing-touch to the marriage customs, and illustrate the curious relations existing between allied families, which I explained in Vol. I, p. 249-253. 533 195 574 576 539

On the wedding day the women who take the bride to her husband sing the *tjeka song* : 585 533

Let us go with her, but let us go back to our homes ! 539

This is an ironical way of saying : "She is going to find trouble : we won't follow her as far as that!." The same idea runs through all the songs which these women sing during the next few days.

585 When they accompany the bride to her new home, they sing :

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U ya kwi, Mamano ! — Whither goest thou, mother ?
U ya kwi shana ? — Whither goest thou ?
Ba ta tshaha shihundju ni lihlelo, mamano !
They will bring thee the basket full of maize and the fan, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u tlokoli, ba tlokolisa, mamano !
When thou hast finished crushing it, they will make thee crush it again, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u kopoli, ba kopolisa, mamano !
When thou hast plastered the floor, they will make thee plaster it again, my mother !

But when they come on a visit, carrying jars of beer as presents to the newly married couple, they are much less guarded in their language, ridiculing the poor husband and his family, and making fun of every one in general. They begin singing on the way, with the jars on their heads :

He ntshonga, banhwanyana, he nga batjanana
He la libango ; fa hi nga labi, we manyana.
Ku laba manyana ka ñwan'a manyana.
We are a small band, young girls ; there are few of us.
We are looking for a piece of meat on the spit ; formerly we should not have known where to find any, our sister (so and so) !
Now our sister will get some for us from her husband !

Hi kokobisa lobe, hi ya kwihi shana ?
Hi bhanu ba ku yalwa !
He fambaka ni khombo, ni khombo dji le kaya !
Where are we going, thus dragging the hook behind us ? (1)
We are the people that are hated.
We walk in misfortune (2), the misfortune that has befallen our house !

Ka ku kandja ñwana a ku na kule.
Wo khunga he lihanyi, we koko !
Ya kokowela : kowe-kowe-kowe.
Where a daughter lives it cannot be very far off.
Go there, grannie, limping and leaning on thy staff !
Listen to the hen cackling. She says : kowe, kowe, kowe. (3)

[222] (1) They compare themselves to women who have been in the field picking kwakwa fruits (p. 17), and are so heavily laden that they cannot carry the hook used for pulling the fruit off the trees ; they have had to tie it to their [illegible] and drag it behind them on their way home. The travellers give it to be understood that they are not out for pleasure !

(2) That of having to go and see a brother-in-law who ill-treats their sister.

(3) This line is an encouragement to the old woman who finds the walk long and tiring. The other women promise her a fowl at the end of their journey, which the son-in-law will kill for her. Note the first line of the third verse : it is a kind of proverb.

On arriving at the village they stop at the edge of the stream : 585 533 539 574

Fulamelani, bankwanyana, hi ya nwa mati nkobeni.
Stoop down, young women, let us drink water in the valley.

Finally they settle themselves in the home of their *bakoñwana*, their relatives-in-law, and begin to insult their hosts.

Ba yala na wo mbengana loko a boleka !
Ba li : " Famba, u ya teka kwenu u buya wa ta sila ".
Ba yala ni shudana, ba yala ni musana
Ba li : " U ya teka kwenu u buya wa ta tlokola. "
They won't lend (our sister) a grindstone when she wants to borrow one.
They say to her : " Go home and fetch one and then come back and grind. "
They won't lend her the small pestle and mortar.
They say : " Go home and get your own, and then come back and crush your maize. "

Then they make fun of the mother-in-law, who is whispering with the other women of the village, making arrangements, doubtless, for the good entertainment of the visitors. They pretend to discover in these asides some terrible plot.

A li ñwono-ñwono ! Mabulela ya nsati lweyi ! Hi file ! Hi lobile !
That woman over there is whispering ! What can she be saying !
We are dead ! We are lost !

As for the head of the village, these shrewish visitors accost him thus :

Ñwenyi wa muti, hi wene ? A ku hi hi mati, hi ñwene ?
A he hlayi wone, ya nhlobo ! Hi hla byala ne sope !
Are you the master of the village ? Are you not going to give us any water to drink ?
We don't mean well-water ; we mean beer and brandy !

The villagers approach to salute the new-comers, who sulk and refuse to say a word. Large pots are made ready for cooking food.

Mi kokela matambeko, mi kokela bamane ?
Kambe hi balala, hi nga ka manyana !
You prepare the large pots... For whom are you making them ready ?
We are enemies, we are !

585 The young folks catch fowls in order to feast them properly
533 They raise objections.
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A hi djyule kwee! A hi djyule kwee!
Hi djyule nkoka-hi-pindja!
We will have nothing to do with that which cries kwee. (The cry of the fowl when being killed.)
We want the animal which is led with a string (a goat).

But it is the husband who has to put up with the worst insults.

Ha! matinga-tingela ya nhunu lwe! Loko a hi bona a ku thanya pirubu.
Ah! see how he wants to avoid us! As soon as he sees us he runs and hides behind the houses! (He is afraid of us!)
Hi laba tima-mbilu! hi djyula mafura ya ku nona phobo.
We want something to satisfy the heart! We must have our fat very rich!
Nyoka ya nyoka! Mbyana ya mbyana! Yi whee!
Serpent that thou art! Dog that thou art! Thou sayest bow-wow!

Then to show him that they really like and appreciate him, they add, with the true untutored rudeness which they maintain to the end of the visit :

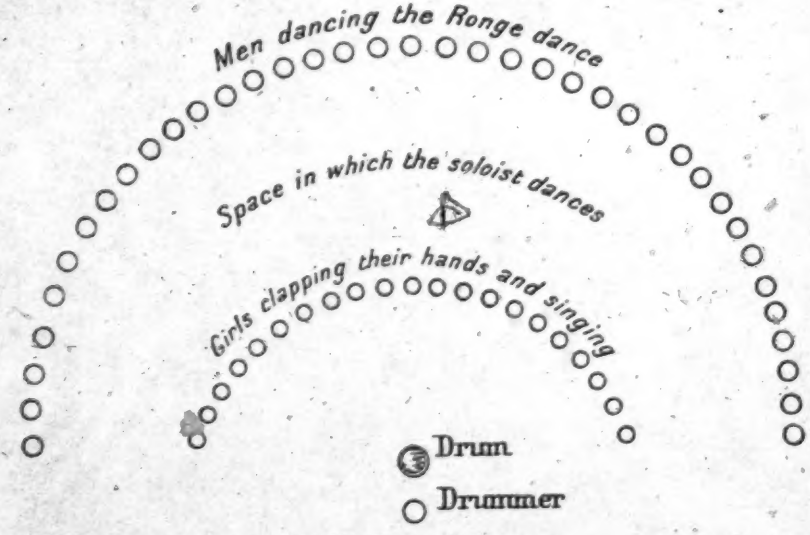
A ku hi lobolele? Na wene, bana ba ku ba ku lobolela ki khume ni ntlhanu!
Won't you buy another wife from us! Later on your daughters will bring you a dowry worth fifteen pounds sterling!

Finally, after having had plenty to eat and to drink and a good dance, they will remark, on leaving :

Hi tlhome nyonga ya mbuti, hi muka
Twine the goat's bladder in our hair, that we may go home.

All this is not very high-flown poetry. The general intercourse between relatives-in-law is by no means refined and this rudeness contrasts with the ordinary civility of Native life. Let us remember that this way of speaking is not intended to show a want of politeness on the part of the visitors, but, on the contrary, is the behaviour suited to the occasion! I have the music of some of these songs, which were noted down by Mrs Audéoud, in Maputju. In No. 13, the bridesmaids actually exhort the bride not to follow her husband! But they are the last to expect her to follow their advice.

533 this reason that some of them are so difficult to understand ;
535 they also vary from one clan to another. The following, according
539 to Spoon, is the most popular song in Nondwane. An individual performs on a drum to give the time to the dancers. Around the drummer, in a semicircle, are arranged the girls who sing the refrains (tekelela), and clap their hands to encourage the soloist (musimi). Farther away, in concentric semi-circles, stand the



The Ronge dance.

men of the village, dancing but not singing. Between the two semicircular ranks the soloist has free play. He commences by saying :

Ndji pfumala shigoba sha nakulori.
Why ? I haven't got a partner for the dance !

The girls reply :

Hi, hlula hi mbilu yi babisaka.
Our hearts are indeed very sad.

He continues :

A psi na nshumu ! Makweru Nwakubyele a fanaka ni pataka dja balungu.
Never mind ! My brother Nwakubyele (will do very well), for he shines like one of the Whites' silver pieces !

Ñwakubyele was a Counsellor whose home was about three quarters of an hour's walk from Rikatla. He was probably a famous dancer. The words of this song would hardly seem very inspiring, but the noise of the drum, the clapping of hands, the dancing, — and the flow of beer, — all helps to account for the intense pleasure which these games afford to the Ba-Ronga. 533 539

Another Ronge song is in praise of another dancer :

Ñwahangwa ! Ñwahangwa ! Loka ba shi bona, shi ne nkaukelo !
Shi bombisa tinsimo ta ku tala ta Ronge !
Ñwahangwa ! Ñwahangwa ! When one sees him (one admires) his beautiful figure. . . .
He is the perfect performer of the numberless Ronge songs.

Still another, on the same theme, celebrates Gilela, a choregraphic artist who must have rejoiced in a marvellously slim figure :

U tlanga, Gilela ! Wa tlanga, likhalo li fana ni ngoti !
Ñwatshibeni ! tlanga ! tlanga ! Ku tjhongo ; hi nga tolobele !
Thou dancest, Gilela ! Thou dancest and thy waist is no thicker than a string !
Son of Tshimbeni ! Dance, dance. — That was too little. — We have not yet had enough !

I came across three other songs which seem to refer to actual historical events, but only one of these is sufficiently comprehensible to be worth transcribing. The music of the first phrase is very characteristic. (Tune 37.)

Ndji wela, ndji wela, Ñwatembe ! Ndji wela, ndji tjike ndji wela.
Ndji koka mabyatsho ; ndji tjutjuma, ndji ya tlhasa ka Ntshangane.
Sala muti wa Muhari ! — Ndji tjike, ndji wela !
I cross the stream. I cross the stream. Oh Tembe ! I cross the stream, let me cross the river !
I tow the boats. I fly away as far as Ntshangane.
Good bye, village of Muhari ! — Let me cross the river.

The two men of Tembe who sang this song to me, telling me that it was a very popular one, were unable to explain its meaning. It is not difficult however to imagine the circumstances under which it was composed. It probably refers to fugitives, coming from the South, arriving at the Bay of Lourenço Marques, and asking the Coast dwellers, subjects of Muhari (a chief of Tembe in the XVIIIth century), for permission to cross the water

533 and to continue their journey northward to Ntshangane (1), that
539 is to say Bilene, where they wished to take refuge. The memory of their wanderings has thus been preserved in a popular song.

These examples will show that the Ronge repertoire is a varied one, but I have still to transcribe that which is, at least as far as my knowledge goes, the most curious of the whole collection. It was explained to me in detail by Shigiyane who, in the Shirindja country some fifty years ago, in the Mpatshiki district, (on the borders of Nondwane), had often taken part in the performance, always in the rôle of soloist. In her opinion it is an absolutely typical song. It is no exaggeration to say that it is almost a dramatic production, and we might rightly call it the *Shirindja comedy*. It comprises five parts — I was on the point of saying five acts, — which follow one another, but without, it must be admitted, any kind of logical sequence.

The *First Act* may be entitled "The old men's march." All the adults of the village go out into the bush, — let us say to the west, — whence they return to the square, halting and limping and dragging their limbs along, as if suffering from some complaint which prevents their walking. To a monotonous air they sing the following words :

Ndji laba batlhaben ! Angati leyi ya masengwe ya tshabisa !
Lomo kweru, mamaza, we, angati leyi yi ndji tsimba ku famba ;
Ndji teka mumphinyi, ndji tshebukela ku djima,
Yi yengeta yi ndji tsimba ku famba !
Pai yengeta, pai ba roma loko ndji tjhama.
Pai ka se mpuri, tsasi wa ku famba.
I am looking for some one to put leeches on me ! This complaint, this cursed lumbago is terrible !
In our village, oh ! my mother ! alas ! this trouble prevents my walking.
Take the handle (of my hoe). I start for the fields to till them. — And this thing stops me !
And it annoys (my relatives) to see me sitting down (doing no work). She may well be annoyed, the beauty, the good walker !

(1) Ntshangane is a surname of Manukosi who did not establish himself in Bilene much before 1820 or 1830. But for various reasons it is probable that this name already belonged to an ancient chief of the country, and that Manukosi simply adopted it as his surname. If this song really dated from the time of Muhari (a chief who reigned in the Tembe clan in the middle of the XVIIIth century), it would be the oldest of the Thonga literary productions yet collected. This fact would prove also that *Shangana*, the name commonly given to Thongas in Johannesburg, is a very ancient one.

During this song, the old folks come to the village; then 533
the young ones go out, in the opposite direction, returning in 539
due course to sing their verse, which forms the second act.

Second Act. Their story is that of a son-in-law who turned his mother-in-law out of his house, because she was suffering from smallpox. The poor old woman went out to die in the bush, in spite of the protestations of her daughter against her husband's cruelty. The husband and wife are heard giving expression to their feelings :

The son-in-law : (Solo) Ndja famba, ndja famba, na ndji nyenyemuka...
Ba mu hlongola, a famba a ya fela shangale.
I am going away ! I am going away! I am going away in disgust
Let her be turned out and let her go and die in the bush !
The daughter : (her part is sung by all the actors in chorus)
Ndji tjetja shitlambutana, shi fambaka shi hona abuhlambo.
Lomo kweru, ka Mpatshiki, hi nga hanyi ! Hi yahana timpsalo ni mashaka.
Pui yentsha he yo ngati ya kutane !
Ngati ya kutane ya tshabisa, hosi ya nga !
Pna ku hlongola ni mukotwana, a famba : a buya a kulubisa ku hlaya, shi hundja hi la, ba mu hlongola, a famba, a ya fela hangale.
I feel pity (when I see) smallpox making its ravages and ruining the face.
Here, at home, in the village of Mpatshiki we no longer live ! We no longer are kind to each other, even amongst relatives.
It is the fault of this terrible disease.
This disease is truly terrible, my lord !
It has driven the son-in-law from his home ; he goes, but returns with cruel words. The old woman comes this way, she is turned out ; she goes away and dies in the bush !

The Third Act begins when young and old are assembled on the village square. It is a dialogue (shibalekana) introducing a certain Gebuza, a man of Nondwane, who took refuge in Shirindja some time in the middle of the last century, when Zihlahla's warriors, led by Machaquene, went to fight in Nondwane on behalf of the Whites. This Gebuza was much beloved by Mpatshiki, a sub-chief living in the South of Shirindja, as we shall see in the fifth act. In any case he was a great dancer, and also possessed a marvellous faculty of saying a great deal and meaning very little! Listen to the following : a voluble dialogue is kept up between this individual and a young man named Mahlahlane.

533 *Gebuza.* Nanjduwe, Mahlahlane ?
539 *Mahlahlane.* Ha makweru !
G. Tlanga, makweru !
M. U tlanga, u ndji tlula,
makweru ! A psi na ntshumu.
G. A ndji psi tibanga
lepsako, nambe u le makweru,
inha ndja ku tlangisile
Nhaviyana!

My friend, Mahlahlane ?
Say on, my brother !
Dance, my brother !
You dance better than I do,
my brother ! That doesn't matter.
I did not know that,
although you are my brother.
I could please you with my dancing.
Nhaviyane.

Here the sense begins to be lacking... it concludes with a cross-fire of utterly meaningless remarks.

Mahlahlane. Eee !
Gebuza. Nhaviyana banitsindja.
M. Eee !
G. Nhaviyane basurumana.
Yi banga mahlolana !
Khumbu-khumbu dja Mayingandlela
A siku dja tolo.
Ku ta wa shikumbu sha ndladla
Ndji ndjuluka ndji nha,
Kupa-kupa ha matikeriñwane.

That's it !
Nhaviyana, the people of the capital.
That's it !
Nhaviyana, the Mahometans.
That works wonders.
? ? ? ? ?
Yesterday.
? ? ? ? ?
I go back, that's what I do.
Etc. etc...

On hearing this extraordinary production, quite as unintelligible as our Swiss children's "empros" — eena, meena, mina, mo, etc.,— the whole company dance in silence, going through various contortions which are doubtless as full of meaning as the dialogue which precedes them.

In the *Fourth Act* all the actors re-enter the stage and commence the *shiombelane*, the hand-clapping with which they so often accompany their songs. They sing the following chorus :

Mamana, n'ta ku yini ?
Ina, hi tlakula Mpatshiki, fiwa-matlanga-ni-tinsana-ta-batjongwana !
He tlanga psigaba, Mpatshiki !
Ntlhamulo, ndji nyiha hi psikwembo, ankulweni !
My mother, what shall I say ?
Oh ! yes ! let us praise our Chief Mpatshiki, he who loves to play with little children !
We dance the Ronge dance, Mpatshiki !
The echo (of our songs) comes back to us from the gods along the whole length of our villages !

Evidently the singers are celebrating the joyous gaiety of this fête, where all are happy, the Chief good-natured, and wherein the gods themselves (the deceased ancestors, probably buried in the sacred wood near the village) join the living.

Fifth Act. A few songs in which Gebuza plays a prominent part, constitute the finale. He was an interminable braggart

when once he started on stories of the contests between the Nondwane and Zihlahla clans. Instead of tilling his fields, he idled away his time in his village, in the shade of a nkanye, the tree of bitter fruits (nunge)... Hence the following dialogue : 533 539

Gebuza. Tjikan, ndji hlayô !	Let me tell you...
Chorus of Shitindje : U hlaya tshini ?	What silly tales do you want to tell us ?
G. Tjikan, ndi hlayô.	Let me tell you...
Chorus : I-le baka Bidjiankomo...	We folks of Bidjiankomo (1) (this is what we say) :
Paigaba pai ne nsiku, i ka leyi ;	There is a day for singing, it is to-day ;
A ku djima, a ku pai koti.	As for work, you are incapable of it.
Gebuza ! Ankanyen lo'kulu lo'wa nunge ; paigaba pai ni nsiku i ka leyi.	Gebuza (you who are lazy), under your big nkanye of bitter fruit there is a day for singing ; this is the day !

The moral of this is sufficiently obvious : "To-day we sing, we dance : but this is not everything. To-morrow we must start with the tillage for the new year."

Doubtless in each small Ronga clan similar songs and dances are performed. They seem to us exceedingly childish, but also very innocent, and show us the taste possessed by these people for musical and literary productions (2).

VI. *Action songs, or songs sung while at work.* 533

I remember once ordering one of my boys to roll along an empty cask, in which we were collecting the rain water. There was a little water in it, and this made a gurgling sound inside.

(1) The forefathers of Mpatshiki, who was the chief then reigning.

(2) I should like to include in this category one of the songs of which Mungamane, the blind minstrel (p. 187) was particularly proud, and which he performed when the dancers paid him an extra fee of 200 reis. It is a dialogue between a husband who is not satisfied with the wife he has bought and the men of his village :

The husband. I have gone to lobola a woman ; I have paid twenty-eight pounds ; I expected she was worth something, and lo ! she is a woman of no account. How did you dare, you, her father, to claim such a big sum, saying that she would be a help to me, when she is so utterly bad ? I will take her ; I will give her back to her parents and claim my money in order to buy another.

The men of the village. No ! Have patience with her ! Do not send her home. Do you not see that you will bring misfortune upon yourself ? Did she not bear you children ? Who will cook your food ? Who will clean your clothing ? When strangers pass through your village, who will give them food ? To go and claim one's herd is troublesome ! Send your children to fetch water ! Send them to gather fuel !

533 Rolling it with vigour, the boy imitated the noise of the gurgling all the while, apparently with great pleasure. Natives are very [461] fond of singing and shouting when at work ; they evidently find help in the conjunction of music and labour.

[539] Many Thonga songs belong to this category. There are songs sung by women when pounding their mealies (I. p. 334), or when carrying their jars of beer or of bukanye to the capital. One of these *psirwalo* songs, extolling Mzila, the hawk that is in heaven, has been quoted I. p. 402. I heard it in February 1893, when an extraordinary inundation had filled all the little ponds in the hollows, and the lake of Rikatla had swollen to ten times its usual size. Beginning with the word : "Chwe! Chwe!" a descriptive adverb which renders the impression caused by a wide surface of water shining in the sun, the women sang :

Chwe ! Nambyana wu tele !
The lake has overflowed !
We seek the hawk who soars in the sky !
Who is the hawk ? It is Mzila !

For the music of the song see tune 17.

On the wharf at Lourenço Marques, one could collect a good number of the carrier songs, sung by the boys who carry loads from the ships to the Custom House. Some are highly impressive, full of guttural sounds such as : Ama-haussa-haussa! There is generally a soloist who intones (sima) and all the boys, covered with dust, clad in sacks, their eyes beaming, seize the heavy piece of iron, the bulky case, raise it rhythmically to their shoulders, and carry it with measured tread to the shed. To have a clever soloist who keeps good time is essential, and I was told that such artists are well paid.

I would remind the reader of the *travellers' songs*, an example of which has been given when speaking of the journeys of the traders in the interior (p. 144).

But the richest collection is that of *sailors' songs*. I heard one of these, (tune 18), on the Nkomati, repeated a hundred times in a monotonous fashion by a boy who was pushing the boat along the shore with his pole, from Morakwen to Lourenço Marques :

"I siloyi, I ndandale," he said — (these words have no more

who suffer. And who knows if their ultimate object be not to assert the value of the individual amongst this down-trodden people where the individual counts for nothing? If this is so, then African folklore possesses a greater and more philosophical value than would appear at first sight. In the collective state of human society it represents an aspiration to a state of things where the individual will have his due place. In this way, it is prophetic. It can no longer be classed merely as an amusement for old women during the long evenings, or as a more or less intellectual parlour-game: it is a monument upon which the soul of the race has recorded, unconsciously perhaps, its ideas and its aspirations. It is thus doubly worthy of our study.

The scope of this book does not allow me to publish more than one or two tales of each category, and I must also abstain from any technical comment upon them, leaving the work of annotation and comparison to professional folklorists. My aim is to describe the South African tribe, and they constitute a sufficient illustration in themselves of its psychic life.

V. *Animal Folklore.*

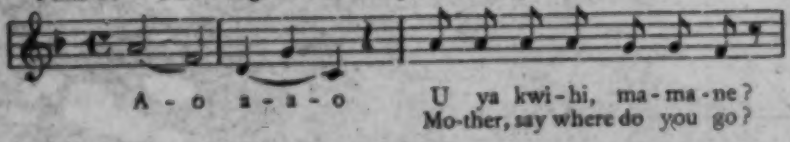
I have published nearly thirty episodes of the Romance of the Hare in the works already referred to; those which I collected in later years form three cycles: that of the *Wily Trickster*, a collection of episodes told by Martha and heard by her in the Maputju country; the most noteworthy of these describe the victory of the Hare over the Lion; *the Hare and the Lion*, told by Simeon Makwakwa of Bilen, containing episodes quite different from those of the first cycle; *the Hare and the Baboon*, written for me by one of my pupils, Mbike Dzengen from Khosen, a very amusing story also known in Bilen with some variations. To these three cycles I have added the story of the *Hare's Hoe*, a curious specimen of a popular literary genus, the ritornello, or anadiplosis not frequently met with in Bantu folklore.

[See cat. 116, pp. 226–235 for texts of folk-tales]

this is generally admitted; the Thongas, however, are not far behind them, some of them having learnt to manufacture the instrument, and a great many playing upon it quite artistically. In order to define this musical system more precisely, let me now give the 41 following tunes as examples, some of which I owe to Mrs Audéoud, whilst the majority have been noted down by myself. 533

B. A COLLECTION OF THONGA TUNES. 533 539

Tune 1. The song of the Manyisa bard (p. 185).

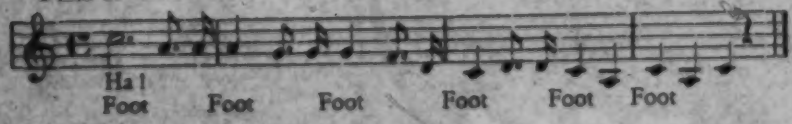


Tunes 2. 3. 4. 5. 6., heard far away through the bush in the village of Muzila, sub-chief of Rikatla, in the years 1890-1893. In N° 4 the singers were beating the ground with their feet to mark the time. In 5 and 6 boys answered to men and girls to women in the usual antiphonic fashion.

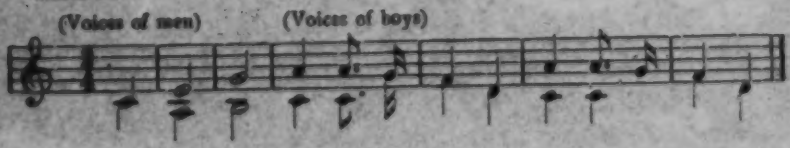
Tune 2.

Tune 3.

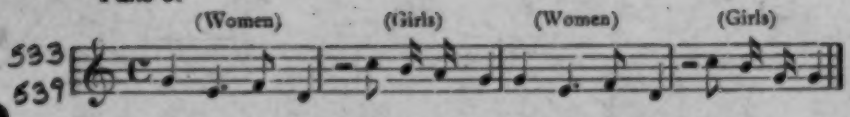
Tune 4.



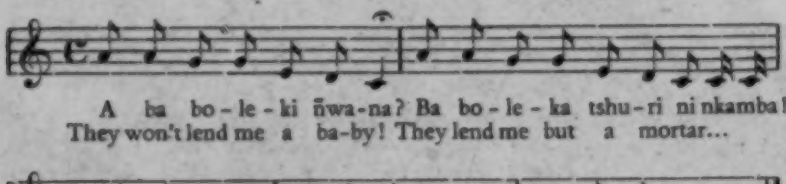
Tune 5.



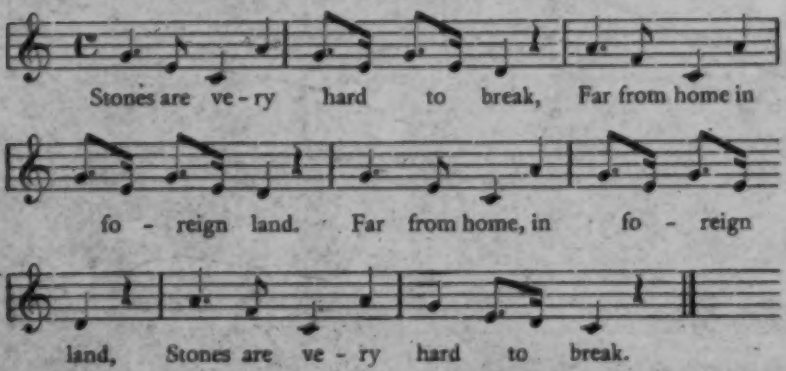
Tune 6.



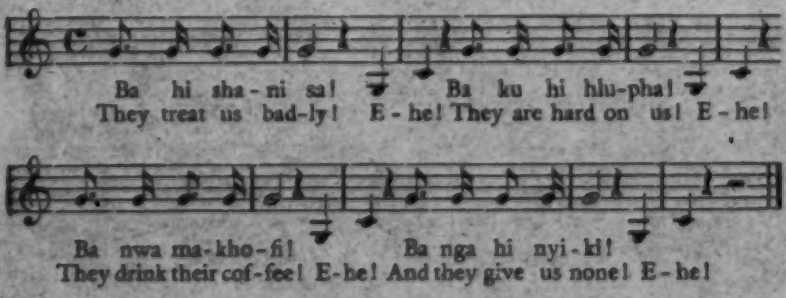
Tune 7. The Complaint of the childless woman (p. 188).


A ba bo-le-ki ñwa-na? Ba bo-le-ka tshu-ri ni nkamba!
They won't lend me a ba-by! They lend me but a mortar...
Ngi ndji ma-nga tlu, Ngi ndji shi-mu-ngwe. Ngi n'ta ku u-tla.
Were I an ea-gle! Were I a bird of prey! Quick would I carry it away!

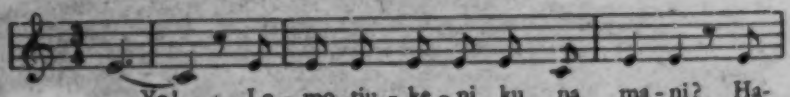
Tune 8. Complaint of the boys going to Johannesburg (p. 189).



Tune 9. Complaint of the Nkuna boy (p. 189).


Ba hi sha-ni sa! Ba ku hi hlu-pha!
They treat us bad-ly! E-he! They are hard on us! E-he!
Ba nwa ma-kho-fi! Ba nga hi nyi-ki!
They drink their cof-fee! E-he! And they give us none! E-he!

Tune 10. The song of the Crab (p. 190).



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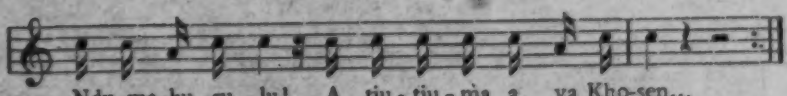
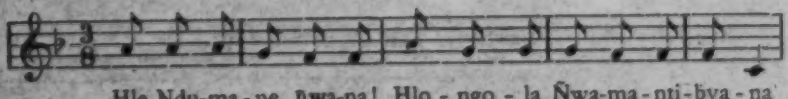
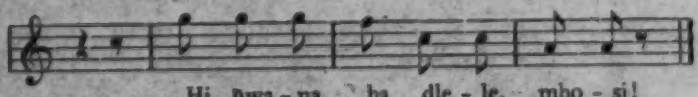
Tune 11. The lament over the deported chief Ñwamantibyane (See I. App. XI.).



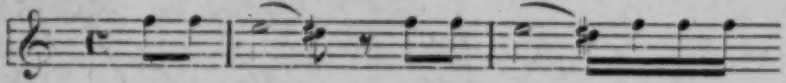
Tune 12. The same lament as sung thirteen years later, with accompaniment of the shitjendje.

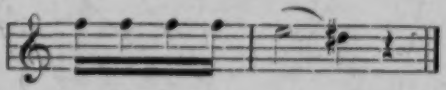




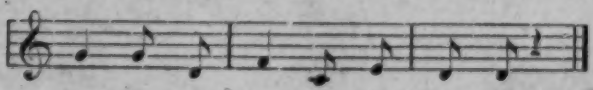
Tune 13. The song of the bridesmaids: (p. 200) "Do not go with him". (Mrs. Audéoud, Makulane). (Comp. p. 197).

533 *Tune 14.* Mourning song heard after the death of Hamunde's wife
539 who was drowned in the lake of Rikatla (1893) (p. 191).

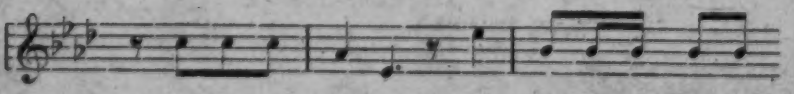


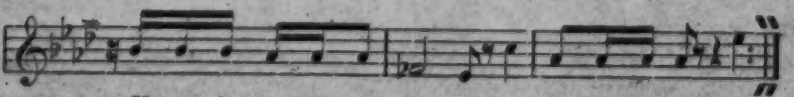


Tune 15. Old Nkuna mourning song (p. 192).

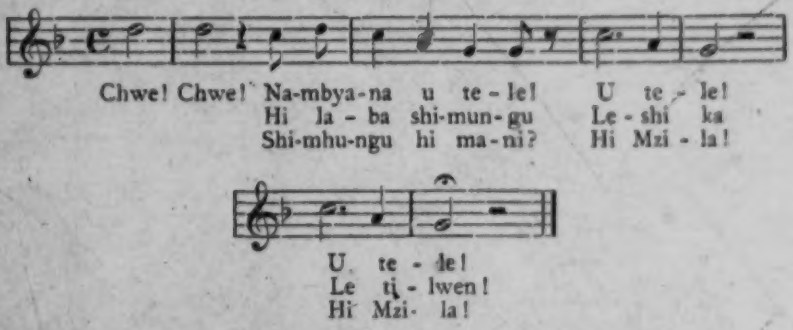


Tune 16. Mourning song at the death of Chief Tshutsha (Maputju. Mrs Audéoud) (p. 192).





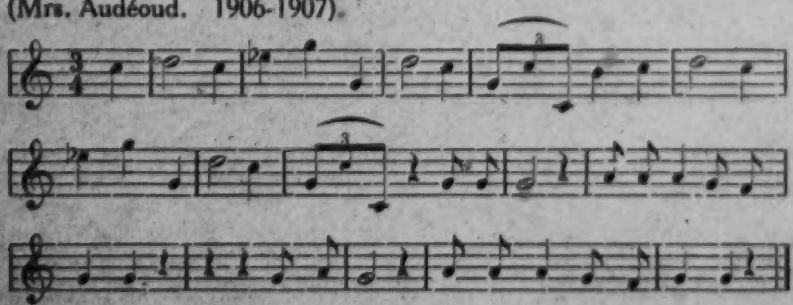
Tune 17. Song of the women carrying "makanye" to Muzila (I. p. 402. II. p. 208). 533 539



Tune 18. Sailors' song on the Nkomati River (1904) (p. 208).

A hi si-lo-yi, A hi nda-nda-le. Ku ni ndla-
A hi si-lo-yi, A hi nda-nda-le. They are starv-
la ka Nti-ma-na, si-lo-yi. A hi si-lo-yi, A hi nda-
ing at Nti-ma-na, si-lo-yi. A hi si-lo-yi, A hi nda-
nda-le. Ku ni ndla-la ka Nti-ma-na, si-lo-yi.
nda-le. They are starv-ing at Nti-ma-na, si-lo-yi.

Tunes 19, 20, 21, 22. Sailors' songs on the Maputju River. (Mrs. Audéoud. 1906-1907).



Tune 20.

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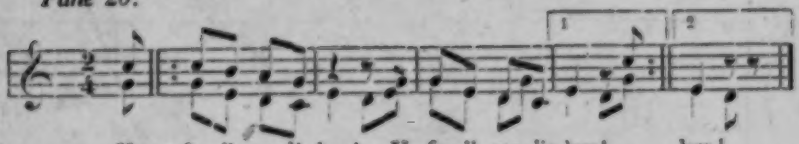
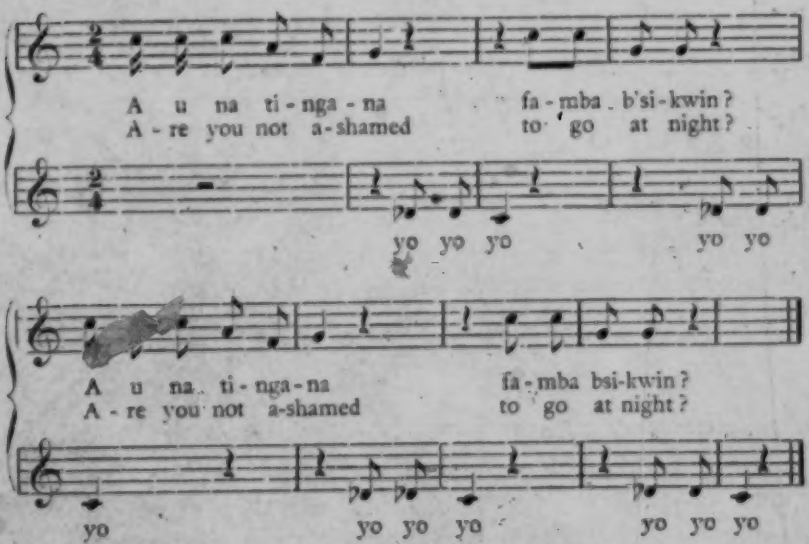
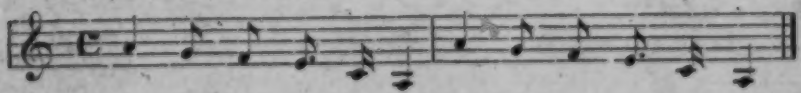


Tune 21.

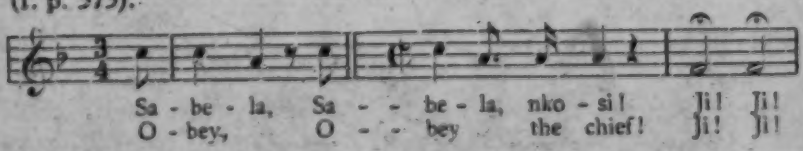

A u na ti-nga-na fa-mba b'si-kwin?
A-re you not a-shamed to go at night?
yo yo yo yo yo
A u na ti-nga-na fa-mba bsi-kwin?
A-re you not a-shamed to go at night?
yo yo yo yo yo yo yo

Tune 22.

Tune 23. Carriers song.



Tune 24. War song sung at the coronation of the Mpfumo chiefs (I. p. 373).



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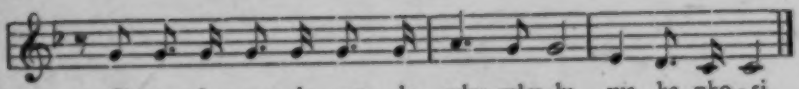
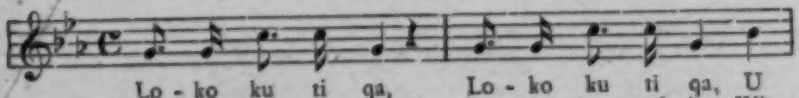
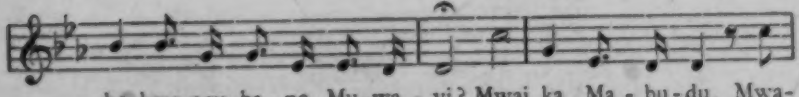


Si ya ku we - la mu - la - mbu mku-lu wa ka nko - si.
Let us go, let us cross the great ri - ver, that of the chief.

Tune 25. The great war song of Maputju (p. 194).



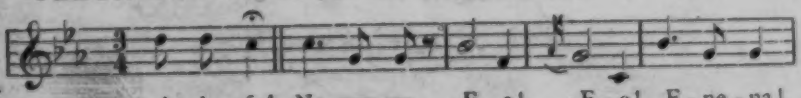
Lo - ko ku ti qa, Lo - ko ku ti qa, U
At the dawn of the day, At the dawn of day, Who



be-kwe ngu-ba - ne Mu-wa - yi? Mwai ka Ma - bu-du, Mwa-
is he that crowned thee, Muwayi? Mwai of Ma - pu-tju, Mwa-

yi, ka Ma - bu - du, U be - kwe ngu - ban!
yi of Ma - pu - tju, Who has crown - ed thee!

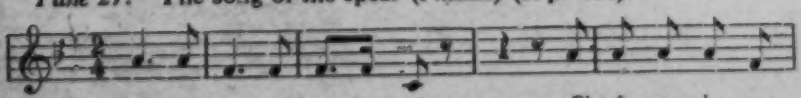
Tune 26. Marching song of the army (I. p. 469).



A - ba - fo! Na-ngu-ya, E - e! E - e! E - ne - na!
The en'my! Here they are, E - e! E - e! Here they are!

Ha - a! Ha - a!
Ha - a! Ha - a!

Tune 27. The song of the spear (Nkuna) (I. p. 461).



Hi yi-kwa ka ma-kho-si, Si phu-ma ka ma-
War comes from the chiefs. It is or dered by the

kho - si, si ga - mbu-za! U-mkhonto se sa-ndhle-ni E-
chiefs. We go and kill! The spear is in our hands. E-

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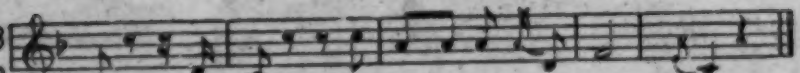
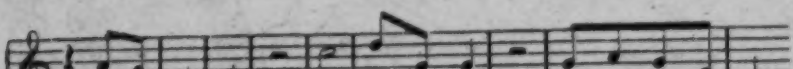


ji! E - ji! U - mkho-nto u sao go - bee...
ji! E - ji! The spear kills and bends in the wound.

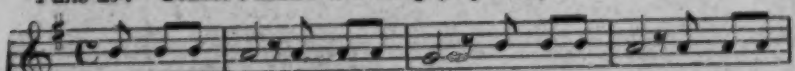
Tune 28. The Giraffe of the desert (Nkuna, Nondwane). I. p. 461.

O - ho ho - ho! Nha si hu - hlu, ya se ma - na - nga.
'T is the gi - raffe, far in the de - sert.

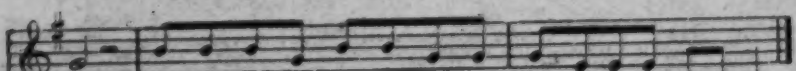


E - ho ho - ho! Nha si hu - hlu ya se ma - na - nga.
'T is the gi - raffe, far in the de - sert.

Tune 29. Oldest Nkuna war song (I. p. 461).



Hi ba yi - ma, hi ba yi - ma! Hi ba yi - ma, hi ba yi-
Let us stand fast, let us stand fast! Let us stand fast, let us stand



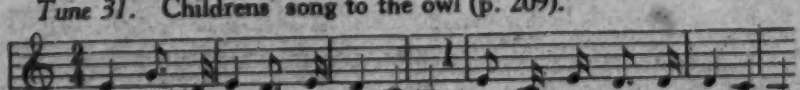
ma! Mi te - ka bu - re - na mi nyi - ka ti-nu-ba ta ba-mbe!
fast! Do not let your strength go, it would help the en'my to con-quer!

Tune 30. Childrens' song welcoming the trek oxen (p. 209).

Gwey - ma - na - o, Gwey - ma - na - o, Gwey - ma-
See the o - xen! See the o - xen! See the

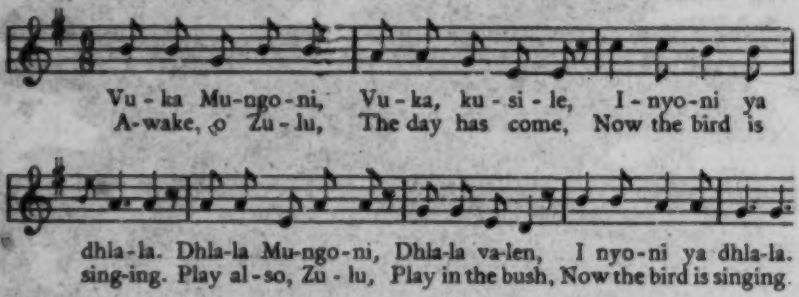
na - o, Gwey - ma - na - o!
o - xen, See the o - xen!

Tune 31. Childrens' song to the owl (p. 209).

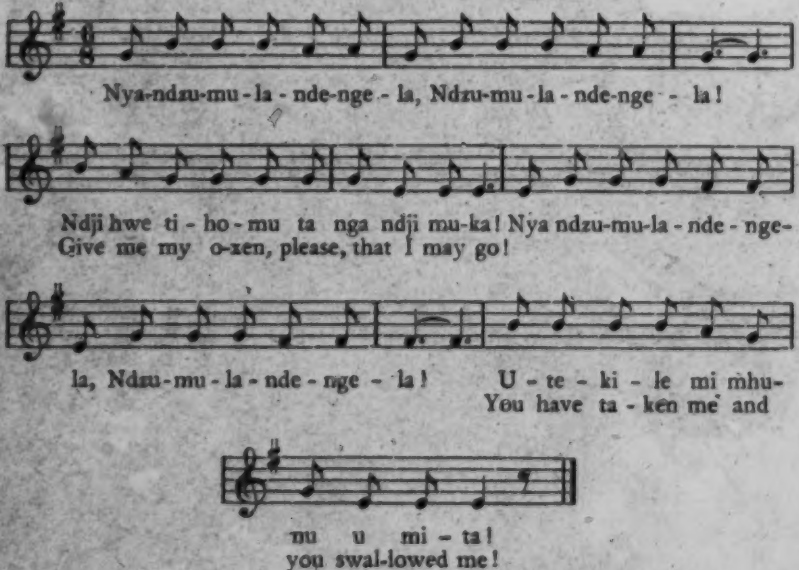


Shi - ko - ta-na gau - le - la fo - le, Ñwa-mbengen gau - le - la fo - le.

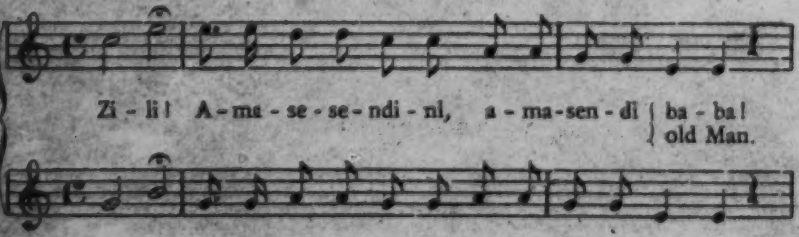
Tune 32. Incantation to the spirit during exorcism (p. 209) (Part VI). 533 539


Vu - ka Mu-ngo - ni, Vu - ka, ku - si - le, I - nyo-ni ya
A-wake, o Zu - lu, The day has come, Now the bird is
dhla - la. Dhla-la Mu-ngo-ni, Dhla-la va-len, I nyo-ni ya dhla-la.
sing-ing. Play al - so, Zu - lu, Play in the bush, Now the bird is singing.

Tune 33. Song of the tale of the ogre Nyandzumulandengela (Timbila song). (p. 210).


Nya-ndzu-mu - la - nde-nge - la, Ndzu-mu - la - nde-nge - - la!
Ndji hwe ti - ho - mu ta nga ndji mu-ka! Nya ndzu-mu-la - nde - nge-
Give me my o-xen, please, that I may go!
la, Ndzu-mu - la - nde - nge - la! U - te - ki - le mi mhu-
You have ta - ken me and
mu u mi - ta!
you swal-lowed me!

Tune 34. Song in two parts, in the tale of Zili (p. 259).



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Si - lo - yi - le se - se - ndi - ni, I nya - ma mu - ne, ya ku
You bad wi-zard — What's that kind of meat, ve - ry

nha - ti se - se-ndin, I ka - la nki - la ka li - ho - ndjo,
strange meat — It has got no tail, it has no horn.

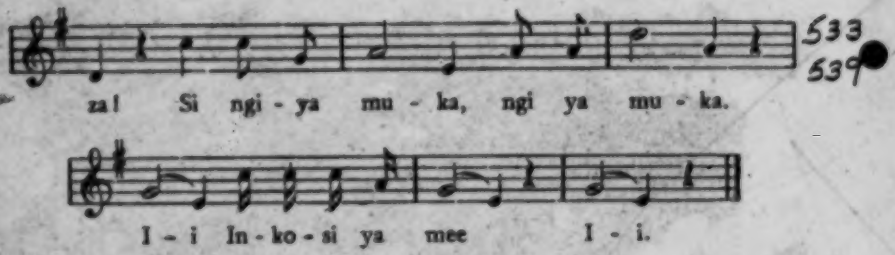
se - se - ndin. Zi - li! A - ma - se - se - ndi - ni, A - ma-

se - ndi ba - ba! Si - lo - yi - le se - se - ndin!
old man, You bad wi - zard

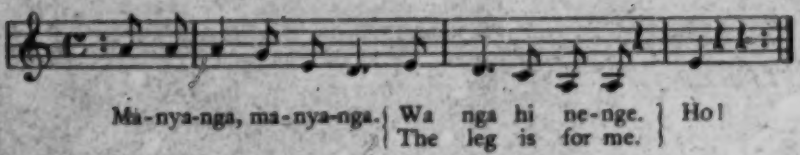
Tune 35. Song of the mother whose child has been carried off by the Baboon (p. 263).

Mfe - ne sa - ndhle - ni, Mfe - ne sa - ndhle - ni, A

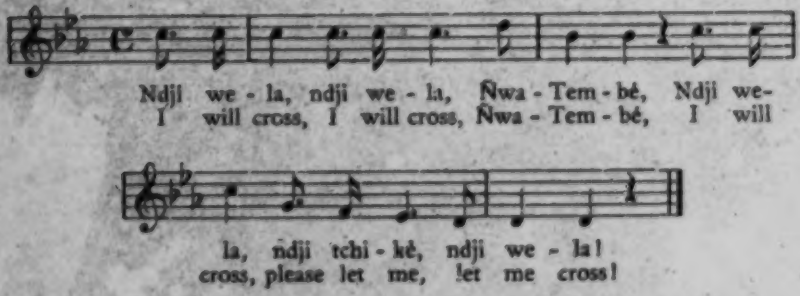
u ngi dhla-yi - se - le mu - nta - na - me, si ya ndo - ndo



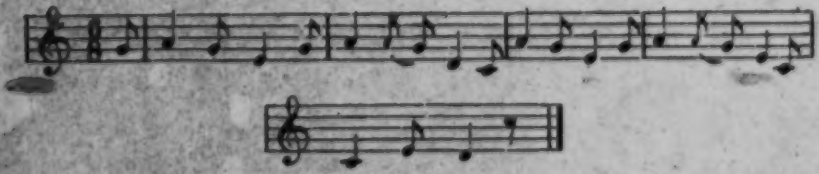
Tune 36. Incantation by which hyena-men are transformed into hyenas, in an ogre-tale (p. 210).



Tune 37. One of the Ronge songs (p. 203).


Ndji we - la, ndji we - la, Ñwa - Tem - bé, Ndji we-
I will cross, I will cross, Ñwa - Tem - bé, I will
la, ndji tchi - kê, ndji we - la!
cross, please let me, let me cross!

Tune 38. A tune played on the shitiringo flute on the banks of the Great Tabi (p. 277).



Tune 39. A shitiringo tune from Shiluvane.

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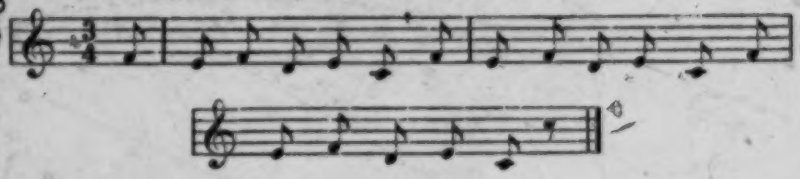
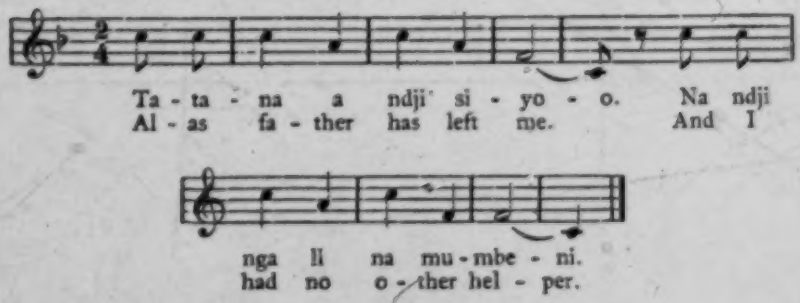
Tune 40. A bunanga tune (I. p. 431, II. p. 277).



Tune 41 (p. 189).



C. THE MUSICAL SYSTEM OF THE THONGAS.

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Having now studied the instruments used by our tribe, and a certain number of tunes, we can try to come to some conclusions as regards its musical system. Let it be said, first of all, that such conclusions are only provisional, and I do not pretend that they are final. Noting down Native tunes is a very delicate task, as nothing is more plastic than sound, and however accurate we have tried to be, we may have introduced something of our own into this transcript. Nothing but phonograph records would be scientifically beyond suspicion! However between all these tunes there is enough similarity, enough family likeness, to convince students of primitive music that they are genuine, and that we are entitled to draw some deductions from this material.

As regards *rhythm*, it is generally very well marked, being emphasised by the accompanying instruments, and the movements of dancers: arms lowered in cadence, weapons brandished, feet stamping the ground at regular intervals, etc. However I

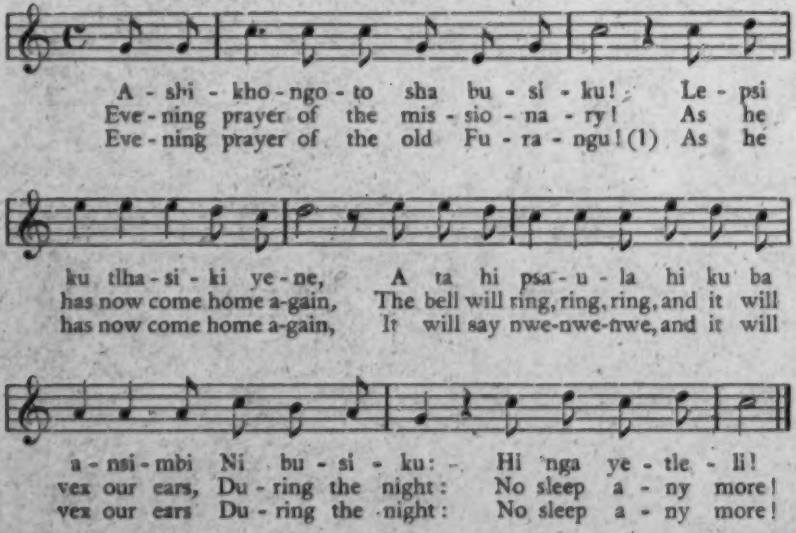
singing in two or three parts, you at once perceive great differences between their system of harmony and ours. These choruses are by no means disagreeable, but are very strange to our European ear. It would be most interesting to seize them and note them down, but it would be a long job! I have succeeded at least in fixing the two parts of the song of Zili, which may be considered typical ; I owe it to two girls of Lourenço Marques, who had clear voices and lent themselves willingly and with great patience to the long investigation. A curious succession of fourths and sixths will be noticed, quite unusual in our music. The professional to whom I submitted this song told me it reminded him of similar chords found in the works of mediaeval composers like Bianchois, and Adam de la Halle. The fourth seems to be more acceptable to the Bantu ear than the third or the fifth. A collection of timbila music would be of great assistance in coming to a conclusion on the subject, as the artists invariably play with two hands, and a score of phonographic records taken in Johannesburg of a good player would be very valuable. Not having had the opportunity of making such an investigation, I must be satisfied to commend it to those who have time to devote themselves to it. 533

To sum up the result of this inquiry, I may say that Thonga music has certainly reached a certain stage of development, being based upon the seven intervals scale, recognizing the major and minor keys, and following a certain system of harmony ; but the melodies are still short and rudimentary and, although they may attain real grandeur when performed by hundreds of warriors, they are generally monotonous and sad. Notwithstanding this, the black race is essentially musical ; its gifts in this domain are real, and if properly developed they will certainly in time produce remarkable results.

We can guess to some extent what contribution the Blacks will make to the musical treasures of humanity when we hear the Negro artists who travel round Europe singing the striking plantation songs which they learned from their fathers. As far as I know, South African Bantus have not yet published many musical compositions comparable to those of their American brethren ; yet educated Natives, even school children, already invent songs for their own pleasure which 533 539

533 are more elaborate than the old ones, but which retain the true Bantu
539 character. I will quote three which I managed to seize in the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques.

The first may be called *the song of the children who no longer wished to attend evening prayer.* I heard them singing it unnoticed on the Lourenço Marques hill. It must be said that on every Mission Station all the converts assemble every evening to attend a short service, bringing their children with them. It seems that, on one occasion, the missionary went away for a furlough and evening prayer was stopped for a while; it was however resumed when he came back home... much to the disappointment of the children, and they composed this song, whose words are perhaps not very edifying, though they ought not to be taken too seriously. The tune, at any rate, is charming:

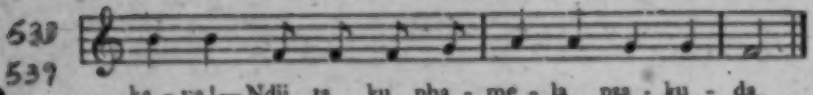

A - shi - kho - ngo - to sha bu - si - ku! Le - psi
Eve - ning prayer of the mis - sio - na - ry! As he
Eve - ning prayer of the old Fu - ra - ngu! (1) As he
ku tlha - si - ki ye - ne, A ta hi psa - u - la hi ku ba
has now come home a-gain, The bell will ring, ring, ring, and it will
has now come home a-gain, It will say nwe-nwe-nwe, and it will
a - nsi - mbi Ni bu - si - ku: - Hi nga ye - tle - li!
vex our ears, Du - ring the night: No sleep a - ny more!
vex our ears Du - ring the night: No sleep a - ny more!

The second was composed *by a blind girl* of the Maputju country at the time of the Murimi Movement of which I shall speak later on (App. V). The prophet of this new god, Murimi, was travelling all over Thongaland to destroy witchcraft and to inaugurate a new

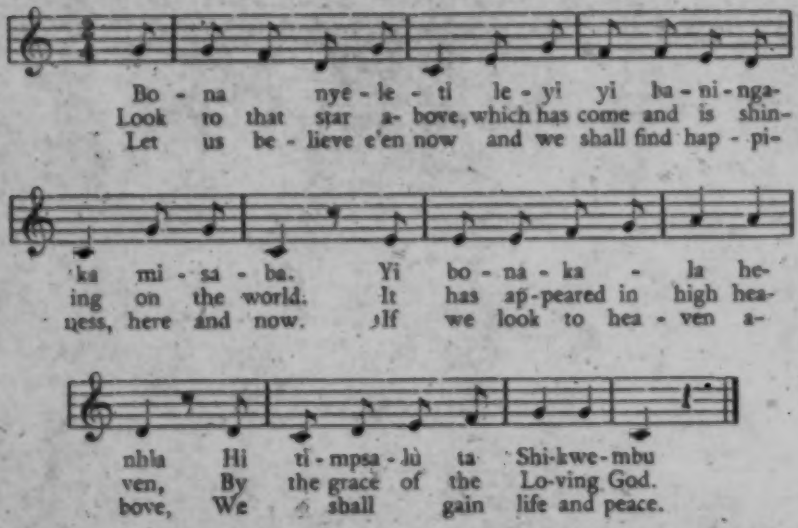
(1) "Old Furangu" is the church elder Frank whose name was transformed according to Thonga phonetics. In the following verses there are a number of descriptive adverbs imitating the ringing of the bell. It will say: go-go-go—rwa-rwa-rwa—nge-nge-nge...

era of prosperity and the chiefs called all their subjects, men and women, to take a snuff of a certain magical tobacco which would rid the country of all the killers by night. The young poetess imagines a woman, a witch, preparing to go to the meeting ordered by the chiefs in order to take the snuff. But she does not at all intend to renounce her criminal ways. She has in her power "psipoko" (see Part. VI, Witchcraft, and App. V), i. e. little folk no bigger than real babies, who are really dead people whom she has bewitched and whom she employs as slaves to till her gardens. During the day she hides them in the bush and during the night she makes them work. Now she takes leave of them before attending the meeting where she is determined to lie, pretending that she has nothing to do with witchcraft, whilst she is secretely determined to go on practising it. The song of the Christian girl reveals her duplicity and concludes by asserting that converts do not believe in this mass of absurdities.

Ka hla - yi ma-ma a ku tjha-ma nho ben, Lo-ko
Their mo - ther told them: Keep quiet in the fo - rest, When I
But we, Chris - tians, we ob - ject, we don't ac - cept. What hea-
ndji da - hi - le fo - le, Ndji ta bu - ya ndji ta ku
have gone to take the snuff, I shall come back and I shall
thens want us to be - lieve, And we an - swer by clo - sing
te - ka, Ndji ya ku pha-me - la psa-ku - da. Lo - ko psi ku
take you, And I shall give you some-thing to eat. They cry, they say:
our ears When we hear from them all this non-sense.
u - we, u - we, u - we, Lo - ko psi ku u - we, Psi
U - we, u - we, u - we! They cry, they say: U - we, As
dji - le - la ku mam' Lo - ku psi ku: U - we! Bu - ya
they call for their mother. They cry, they say: U - we! Come back



The third song is a sort of hymn whose author is a young evangelist belonging to the Chopi tribe, a tribe particularly gifted for music. This boy, named Onesime, was lame and lay for many years on his bed of suffering ; there he composed quite a number of melodies which he taught his pupils. Here is the *Song of the Star*, which he himself wrote for me in Sol-Fa Notation, and in which he expresses the feelings of his pious heart :


Bo - na nye - le - ti le - yi yi ba - ni - nga-
Look to that star a- bove, which has come and is shin-
Let us be - lieve e'en now and we shall find hap - pi-
ka mi - sa - ba. Yi bo - na - ka - la he-
ing on the world. It has ap-peared in high hea-
ness, here and now. If we look to hea - ven a-
nhla Hi ti - mpsa - lù ta Shi-kwe - mbu
ven, By the grace of the Lo-ving God.
bove, We shall gain life and peace.

See at the end of this volume the Practical Conclusion of Part. V : *The Problem of Native Education.*

769 there. It is inculcated, and kept alive, by the truly terrifying tales
778 which are told concerning them. These are related in the evening,
538 in low tones, and with frightened looks, and the feeling of awe is
776 fed and maintained by these legends. I intend to narrate here those I heard from various informants ; these stories will illustrate better than any philosophical explanation the ideas of the Natives concerning their gods. Those connected with the Libombo wood are the most typical. I owe them to Spoon and the aged Nkolele. I will begin with those which are of most ancient origin, and whose legendary character is most unmistakable.

539 One day a woman was passing close by the forest of Libombo : she
776 plucked a sala (p. 16) from a tree and ate it, after which she went to till
769 her garden. On another occasion, just as she was cracking another sala against the trunk of a tree before eating it, she saw that the fruit, instead of having a stone inside, was filled with small vipers. She threw it away, but the vipers said to her : "Go on! Eat away! Haven't we seen you every day picking sala? And these sala are ours, and not yours. What shall we gods have to eat? Have we not made this tree to grow?" And she went home and died, because she had been cursed by the gods.

Another woman was passing by the forest on a rainy day, and saw a child, who had climbed a tree, and was eating berries. She approached the child and said : "Give me some of those berries!" The boy made no reply, so she began to pick some for herself. When she had picked enough, she said : "Are you going on picking berries in such a rain as this! Where is your mother?" He still remained silent. She felt sorry for the child, thinking he was indeed to be pitied : — "Come," said she, "and let me carry you on my back." So she went up to the tree, and lifted down the child, and tied him on her back with her shawl ; then, putting her conical basket on her head, she started for home. On arriving at her hut, she saw that a fire had been lighted on account of the rain. — "Put on some more wood," said she, "for the sake of this little one, whom I found on the road eating berries." She untied the shawl, and tried to place the child on her hips, but he refused to be moved, and clung to her back, where he kept quite still. The folks said to the woman : "Put him down on the ground, so that he can go and warm himself near the embers." He refused. Then they said to him : "Get down!" But he still refused to move. Then the villagers said to the woman : "Didn't you pass by the Libombo forest?" — "Yes! I did," she replied, "and there I found this child gathering berries, and

brought him along with me." — "This is no child! It is a god!" they cried ; "a child never has a hard head like this one has. And look at his legs! What strength! How ever did you come to think it was a child?" —"But," said she, "I certainly thought it was a child — and can it be a god?" — They sent for magicians, who threw the bones. At once the magicians knew what was wrong : — "Ha! Hé! You found him at Libombo, did you not?" They tried to remove him by force, but he clung still more closely to the woman's back, stiffening his legs round her waist, and his arms around her neck. They tried to unclench his hands, but it was impossible! Then they begged her to go back to Libombo, and implore the owners of the forest to set her free from this child. She took her basket, and returned to the tree where she had found him. The guardian of the forest soon appeared. It was Makundju, the ancestor of Nkolele. He inveighed against the woman and those who accompanied her, saying : — "When you find fruit in the forest, do not pick it! If it be maize, leave it alone, or, if you pick it, spare at least one ear. If your chicken flies into the wood, do not go after it. If your goat runs away into it, you must not follow it. We are worn out, we folks of Libombo, with offering sacrifices for you passers-by... Your troubles are the consequences of the sins (psihono) you commit in this place." A white hen was caught, and sacrificed on behalf of the woman. Emitting the "tsu" the priest said : "Behold our ox, by which we present our petition. Let this god leave her back. She did not do it on purpose. She thought it was a child ; she did not know it was a god. Which way can people go henceforth if you, gods, put obstacles in the way?" While this sacrifice was being offered, the being suddenly left her back, disappeared, and no one knew how, or whither he went. As for the woman, she trembled violently and died...

A man once defied the prohibition of cutting dry wood in the forest. Suddenly he was pelted from behind with kwakwa and sala fruits. It was the gods. He tried to fly, but was unable to find the path out of the thicket. He was lost, and tired of wandering about he let his bundle of faggots fall. Then the gods allowed him to find his way out again, but, when he found himself in the open, he perceived that he was carrying nothing, even his axe had been taken from him.

Sometimes the gods made themselves heard ; when they were especially happy they played on trumpets, sang and danced. Passers-by often tried to get a glimpse of them, but the noise

776 on earth. I have nothing to fear or to hope from my neighbour's
769 gods, if I do not belong to the same "shibongo" (I. p. 360). The gods of the royal family are invoked on behalf of the whole country, and have power to give rain to the land ; but it is the chief and his uncles who must approach and sacrifice to them. I have no right to do so. It is true that an exception seems to be made in the case of the gods of bitterness, or of the bush, who attack the traveller, although he belongs to another family. But this is indeed only an exceptional case, it being their kinsfolk, who neglected to bury them, who are most exposed to their wrath.

Another proof that they are men is this : although as gods they have acquired these divine ontological powers, they have made no real moral progress. They are not better than they were as men. Their *character* is that of suspicious old people, who resent any want of respect, or attention, on the part of their descendants. They wish to be thought of, and presented with offerings. It would seem that they are not actually in need of anything, for they live in abundance, but they exact a punctual observance of the duties of their descendants in regard to them. They must *luma*, eat the first fruits, and have their share of the tobacco leaves and also of the ground tobacco. They are jealous,
783 and avenge themselves when forgotten (1). The only sin which
769 seems to be deserving of punishment is to neglect them. There
776 are, however, two other faults which they strongly condemn, and for which they may even kill their descendants : the first is any serious *transgression against the law of hierarchy* (as we saw, when dealing with the sacrifice of reconciliation) ; they punish especially the young man, even though he be the chief, who dares thus to

539 (1) In a very interesting tale, which is unique, and which I owe to Camilla and have published in *Les Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, p. 264, we hear of the people of Mashaken, near Lourenço Marques forgetting for many years to make offerings to their gods. Famine ensues. The men go to the marsh to cut sugar canes. They are unable to break them, and the gods chase them away. The women, who come to a place where honey is flowing from a tree, try to take the combs, but their hands break off and remain fixed to the spot ! The bones order Sabulana, a young girl, to go to the sacred wood to sacrifice. She enters the forest and sees the gods assembled. They say to her : "Tell your people that they have sinned, because they have tilled the ground and harvested without presenting us with any offerings. Now we are glad, because they have come to invoke us." This story was told me as a tale, not as a legend of the sacred woods.

of one of the most intelligent women of our congregation at Lourenço Marques, who was also the best acquainted with all the ancient Ba-Ronga customs. Timotheo Mandlati said to me, on the other hand : "Our fathers all believed that life existed in Heaven" (butomi byi kone tilwen). It is quite certain that, according to the ideas of the Thongas, as well as to those of many other tribes, Heaven was a *place* ; a place much to be desired, where was to be found that which is so seldom met with on earth, namely rest. Hence a song, which is to be found in a very similar form amongst the Zulus (1), and even amongst the Ba-Sutho, and runs thus :

(Solo) Bukali bya ngoti !
(Tutti) Nha ndji yahliya ngoti, ndji ya Tilwen !
Ndji ya kuma ku wisa !
(Solo) What a rare thing is string !
(Tutti) Oh ! how I should love to plait a string, and go up to Heaven, I would go there to find rest !

An old refrain which has come down through the ages, and has in no wise been inspired by the Christian religion : it is pure, authentic Bantu ! Thus the warriors, when threatening their adversaries, and hurling defiance from one troop to another, say : "Make ready your string, and climb up to Heaven, there is no place for you here below. Here you will find nothing but misfortune" (I. p. 472) (2).

Thongas, however, never declare as a belief that men go to Heaven after death. They become "psikwembu," and we have already seen where their abode is. Nevertheless Viguet told me the story of a Hlengwe, whom he knew in times long gone by, in the Bilen country, who used to address the people in mysterious tones as follows :

(1) "Who could make a cord, whereby to go to Heaven ?" Such is the Zulu version given by Callaway.

(2) When a bone-thrower has decided that his consultant must make an offering, he often tells him, looking towards heaven : "Go, make the offering and say : It is good if I overcome the people who are below by the country which is afar." The people who are below are the wizards. The country which is afar is heaven. Another version is as follows : "It is good if I overcome the people who are below and reach the country which is far away." In the first case Heaven is considered as possessing a power greater than that of wizards ; in the second it means evidently the place of rest.

Though you eat plenty of fat and of honey, and drink plenty of beer, the day will come when you will say "Huku-huku" (fall on your back, i. e. die) ; people will say "Woo" (i. e. mourn you), and ask you : "Where are you going?" Then answer : "I am going to Ngundju-ya-mapsele, the Source-of-Grace, to the place where the oxen are herded by vultures (because there is no hatred and no death there), where the mosquito is killed with a stick (because everything is so flourishing and big there), where the fowl dies from fat (because there is no disease nor dearth in that blessed land) — to Heaven!" 772

This Hlengwe had either heard these words in his home or had invented them himself.

But Tilo is something more than a place. It is a *power* which acts and manifests itself in various ways. It is sometimes called *Hosi*, Lord. But this power is generally regarded as something entirely impersonal. Thongas appear to think that Heaven regulates and presides over certain great cosmic phenomena to which men must, willingly or unwillingly, submit, more especially those of a sudden and unexpected nature, by which I mean above all rain, storms, and, in human affairs, death, convulsions and the birth of twins. From this idea spring certain very characteristic customs, which I shall proceed to describe briefly.

It is Heaven that afflicts children with those terrible and mysterious *convulsions*, which carry them off without their having been really ill, in a manner of speaking... "He is ill from Heaven" — "A ni Tilo," said an old Native doctor to me in a low tone, referring to a case of this description. So Heaven is the great nombo (infantile disease), (I. p. 48), whilst diarrhea is the small nombo. [753]

But more than this, *it is Heaven which kills and makes live.* Hence the frequent expression : "Heaven loved him," when someone has escaped some deadly danger, or is particularly prosperous, and "Heaven hated him," when he has been very unfortunate, or has died.

The same idea is expressed in the following dirge. 772 539

Wa hi kanganyisa, Tshabane !
Hi yingeli Tilo, dji ku dja buya nininini !
Hi kumi babamuna babiri, ba famba ba hlahluba Tilo.
Wa nga yingela pfa bambe, u ta yingela ni pfa ku !

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You deceive us, Tshabane!
We have heard Heaven thunder... The roaring will soon come.
We have seen two men who were going to throw the bones with reference to Heaven...
Doubtless you have heard tell of the misfortunes of others:
You will hear them talking of your own!

Enigmatic words, but, with the help of the Natives, I have unravelled their meaning: — You are deceiving us, Tshabane, you who are trying to reassure us. We have heard Heaven. A storm has burst, there was a sudden downpour, a flash of lightning; Heaven has struck! It has killed some one. Two men passed by, terrified; they went to consult the bones, to try and find means to ward off these strokes of Heaven. Useless! If you have seen the sorrow of those who mourn, do not imagine that you will escape. It will soon be your turn!

Another song which contains a similar allusion to Heaven as the power which kills, has already been quoted when describing the customs of widowhood (I. p. 207). "What shall we say to thee! King!"

The tale of "the Road to Heaven" (See *Les Chants et les Contes des Ba-Ronga*, p. 237) is also very significant in this respect. It tells the story of a young girl, who, having broken her jar, and fearing a scolding from her mother, *climbs up her string* and goes to Heaven. (Always the same idea of shelter from all evils.) (1) There she finds a village; a child is given to her, because she is so gentle and obedient. Her sister tries to do the same thing. But she is ill-tempered and wicked. Heaven explodes (baleka), kills her (by lightning), and her bones are blown right to her parents' house. In the tale of the Adventures of Bonawasi (Ch. & C. p. 295) Heaven intervenes to endow a young Native with peculiar wisdom, by means of which he gets the better of the Governor of the town. Possibly some idea of the God of the Europeans may have found its way into the composition of this tale, in which may be recognized certain traces of foreign influence. But this is assuredly not the

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(1) The mention of this string is perhaps due to a tradition common in other African tribes. According to the Ba-Rotse, Leza, God, who dwelt on earth, ascended to Heaven one day by a spider's web. Several human beings tried to climb up the same way, but fell and failed in the attempt. (Comp. A. Jalla, *Foi et Vie*, Oct. 1910.)

case in respect to the story of Ñwahungukuri, which I have published in *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 312, and in which Heaven is credited with the full knowledge of a hidden crime committed by a murderer. This idea is so far from being an innovation due to European influence that thoughtful Natives all agree that, in former times, it was more usual to attribute death to the power of Heaven. It was a common saying that "Heaven has fallen (ku we Tilo) on such and such a village." Nowadays it is rather the gods, or the wizards, who are believed to cause death.

But this belief in Heaven has not only inspired these sayings, songs, and tales; it has also given rise to curious customs, a description of which will throw more light on this conception of the Thongas. Their existence proves that we are not here dealing with the "animatic" invention of some person gifted with a vivid imagination (p. 366), but with a true tribal belief.

II. *Customs Connected with the Conception of Heaven.*

1) Heaven, Twins and Rain.

This power, which causes lightning and death, also presides, in a very special way, at the *birth of twins*, so much so that the mother is called by the name of "Tilo," — "Heaven," — and the children "Bana ba Tilo," — "Children of Heaven" (1). Now the arrival of two or three babies at the same time is looked upon by the Thongas as a great misfortune, a defilement in respect of which very special rites must be performed. I give the details of these rites as practised in the Zihlahla, Nondwane, and Nkuna clans, as they were described to me by Tobane, Mboza, Mankhelu, etc.

Twins (hahla, or bandjwa, dji-ma) are now both allowed to live. But in former times, one of them, the one which appeared to be the feebler, was always put to death, being left to die of

(1) In our school at Lourenço Marques there was a charming young girl, who was named Nwana-wa-Tilo, Daughter of Heaven, because she had a twin brother.